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Schulte Nordholt, H.G.C.

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## Book reviews

Benedict Anderson, *Under three flags; Anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*. London: Verso, 2005, ix + 255 pp. ISBN 1844670376. Price: USD 25.00 (hardback).

GREG BANKOFF  
University of Hull  
g.bankoff@hull.ac.uk

One always feels somewhat self-conscious when purposely setting out to criticize the 'master', the seasoned scholar, the mature thinker and emeritus academician. Benedict Anderson is all these things and more, not only to those of us interested in Southeast Asia but also to the much wider audience that he is able to reach with his ideas. I thought at first that *Under three flags* was going to be a slightly self-indulgent affair, one written to satisfy a personal historical curiosity, in a style reminiscent of early Anna Tsing in which not only the author's reflections and life, but even his family – in the shape of a brother (p. 32) – make their appearance in the text. Of course, Anderson is much too good a scholar to do only that and the book soon starts weaving an intriguing tale about those who courted torture and death to bring down *fin de siècle* culture through assassinating its notables and inciting fear amongst its elites. Anarchism and its advocates posed a threat to the stability of late nineteenth-century European societies and their neo-colonial and colonial offshoots that is just sufficiently reminiscent of the one posed today by terrorism and its perpetrators to make us feel slightly uncomfortable, a parallel the author draws early on (p. 7) and then rather surprisingly never returns to. What Anderson does do, however, is to make all this political hubbub a backdrop upon which to etch the Philippine Revolution and some of its principal protagonists, namely José Rizal, Isabelo de los Reyes and Mariano Ponce. While his declared aim may be to chart 'the gravitational force of anarchism' across the globe (p. 2), the work is still primarily one on the Philippines.

There is not so much a plot to this book (though there is always some notion of chronological momentum) as a series of trans-national actions or discussions that take place simultaneously in many locations. The first two chapters compare Reyes's *El folk-lore Filipino* and Rizal's *El filibusterismo*, not so much as works of art but as contrasting exercises in nationalist reconstruction. The 'useful and authentic past' (p. 22) of the former is contrasted to the brooding, introspective vision of the latter, with its emphasis on 'failure, defeat and death' (p. 53). Rizal continues to be the subject of the next chapter but the focus now is on his mental world and what influenced him during his sojourn

in Europe between 1882 and 1891: who he read and what he read about and how all this possibly shaped his first novel, *Noli me tangere*, and made of it a symbol of Filipino resistance to Spanish colonialism. Chapter Four relentlessly pursues Rizal from his return home to his execution in 1896; but his life and writings are now interwoven with events elsewhere, especially the revolt in Cuba and its significance for the revolution in the Philippines. The final chapter continues in this inter-Hispanic vein, as affairs in the Caribbean and Catalonia are shown to have bearing on those in the islands. The emphasis is on Ponce and his voluminous correspondence with scholars not only in Western Europe but also in Japan and China. Anderson shows how activists such as Ponce were 'crucial nodes in the infinitely complex intercontinental network that characterized the Age of Early Globalization' (p. 233).

What really makes this such a memorable study, one to urge students to read, is the manner in which the late nineteenth-century Philippines is shown to be somewhere significant, even if ever so fleetingly, rather than a backwater forever off the map of world events. During the revolution and subsequent war with America, news of the archipelago commanded an international audience that the subsequent excesses of its politicians or the hazards of its landforms and climates have rarely matched. This ability to see the Philippines as not only part of something larger, influenced by what happened elsewhere as well as helping shape the outcome of events far distant from its shores, marks Anderson's single greatest contribution to the history of the islands. It is perhaps because the author is not only, or even primarily, a Filipinist that he is able to bring to bear a more global perspective that has its roots in an erudition based on wide and comparative reading. (One is inevitably impressed by the depth of the scholarship exhibited here when reference is made to the Mexican Leopoldo Zea's 'illuminating introduction' to the Venezuelan edition of Rizal's *Noli* published in 1976 (p. 64, note 19).) This same insightfulness applies to the figure of Rizal himself, who emerges from the rather moralistic straitjacket imposed upon him by many nationalist historians to assume a more real persona, someone who was influenced by what he saw and read, who got on with some people but not others, and who grew rather too self-important for his own good in the end. Here, at last, is both the hero and the man. The irony is that this does nothing to detract from his stature, but rather adds to his character. I love, too, the way the narrative sweeps up in its progress both the historically obscure (at least from an English-speaking audience's perspective), such as the Japanese novelist Suehiro Tettyo, and giants astride the international stage, like Sun Yat-Sen. Again, the Philippines, the events that enfolded there, and the principal agents involved are portrayed as part of a larger plot, one that runs concurrently with more well-known stories and that merits a wider recognition than it has so far been given.

Given this refreshingly new perspective on Filipino history, it seems doubly unfortunate that Anderson continues to pursue some rather well-worn storylines when it comes to reviewing late nineteenth-century Spain and her remaining colonial empire. The reader is repeatedly reminded (yawn) that what we are dealing with here is a state that is weak, decrepit, brutal, and 'dying', among other such attributes (pp. 143, 151, 167, 185). The broad brush that is all too often used to paint Hispanic society of this period fails to recognize the dynamic forces of enterprise and innovation at work that were also characteristic of the times: forces that in the case of the Philippines saw the creation of a professional forestry service in 1863 (incidentally many years before one existed in the USA), and that made Manila the initial linchpin in a network of meteorological stations providing timely warnings to shipping and coastal authorities in the South China Sea. Just as the author reminds us that Rizal's character was much more complex than has hitherto been thought, so, too, the colonial Philippines was not only a repressive, priest-ridden society mired in superstition and governed by naked aggression. The reality was more nuanced, and deserves better from its chroniclers. Apart from this hobbyhorse of mine, I also found Anderson's deliberations on which outré novelists of the time Rizal may or may not have read while in Europe, and their supposed influence on the nationalist's imagination, rather speculative and – while certainly interesting – not all that convincing. Even the title of the book remains a trifle enigmatic: the reader is left to ponder what exactly these three flags are, or, to be more precise, what the third one is. Anarchism, yes; nationalism, undoubtedly; and I suppose the other must be socialism, but its colours seem to flap only ever so lightly over the turn-of-the-century Philippines.

*Under three flags* may not be the greatest work Anderson has ever written, and its title may not pass into our everyday lexicon as *Imagined communities* has done. But it is still a fine piece of scholarship that most of us would be only too proud to claim as our own. I suggest you read it and see for yourself what I mean.

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Leakthina Chau-Pech Ollier and Tim Winter (eds), *Expressions of Cambodia; The politics of tradition, identity and change*. London: Routledge, 2006, xvi + 226 pp. ISBN 0415385547. Price: GBP 75.00 (hardback).

DAVID CHANDLER  
Monash University  
david.chandler@adm.monash.edu.au

This variegated, refreshing collection by thirteen younger scholars approaches present-day Cambodia and the Cambodian diaspora from the perspective of cultural studies. The editors hope that the essays will 'open up new spaces of analysis [and] identify fresh topics of study' (p. 6). In my view, *Expressions of Cambodia* (a nice, post-modern title) admirably achieves this goal.

After a spirited introduction which sets a new agenda for Cambodian studies, the book is divided into four parts: 'Rescripting Angkor' (pp. 21-70), 'Identity and liminal space' (pp. 71-116), 'Performing tradition' (pp. 117-64), and 'Engaging modernity' (pp. 166-205). Its unity, like Indonesia's, lies in its diversity, and in the skill with which thirteen adroit young scholars have presented the fruits of their research. The book closes with a detailed bibliography.

Over the years, most published work about Cambodia has taken the form of two heavily laden baskets connected by a slender carrying pole. One basket is labelled 'Angkor', and the other 'Khmer Rouge'. Very little work has been done on the centuries that fell between these two phenomena, or, until very recently, on subjects that don't fit the two categories. Moreover, scholars who deal with one basket often ignore the other. Some of them even have trouble admitting that 'Angkor' and the 'Khmer Rouge' occurred in the same place among people speaking the same language and sharing the same landscape and history. In the twenty-first century, as these essays admirably demonstrate, there are many other topics that will reward sustained scholarly attention.

That said, three excellent chapters in *Expressions of Cambodia* deal with Angkor and another is concerned with the Khmer Rouge. Penny Edwards, who has written perceptively on Cambodian nationalism in the colonial era, examines the graffiti in several languages that have been carved on Angkorian temples. Tim Winter, drawing on extensive interviews with foreign visitors, shows us how many of them are drawn towards sites associated not only with vanished grandeur but also with genocide and death. Winter's chapter links the two 'baskets' in an interesting way. Panivong Norindr, drawing to a large extent on French-language sources, confronts what he calls 'the fascination of Angkor Wat' in the post-colonial world. He closes with a discussion of contemporary tourism and its impact on people living near the ruins. Timothy Dylan Wood's chapter, 'Touring memories of the Khmer Rouge', tells how the last headquarters of the Khmer Rouge at Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia is now being turned into a tourist site as part of what he calls the 'commodification of Cambodian history', echoing points made earlier by Winter and Norindr.

In limited space, it is impossible to discuss the remaining chapters in detail, but two that caught my attention were Leakthina Chau Pech Ollier's 'Rapping (in) the homeland' and Annuska Dirks's 'Khmer women in global factories'. Ollier's essay deals with Cambodian-American rap singers in Long Beach, California, while Dirks accompanies young rural women as they immerse themselves, with mixed results, in the maelstrom of urban factory work. Ollier

and Dirks take us inside the lives of present-day Cambodians as they confront stresses, choices and traumas unfamiliar to many readers of the book. The two essays are empathetic rather than intrusive (a characteristic of the entire book) and show the way, as all the essays do, towards new and rewarding scholarly work about this haunting, beautiful country and its resilient people.

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Ying Shing Anthony Chung, *A descriptive grammar of Merei (Vanuatu)*. Canberra: Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2005, xi + 74 pp. [Pacific Linguistics (Shorter Grammars) 573.] ISBN 058835606. Price: AUD 27.00 (paperback).

ALEXANDRE FRANÇOIS  
 Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale (LACITO)  
 Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris  
 alexandre.francois@vjf.cnrs.fr

Merei is 'no doubt' (p. 56) an Oceanic language, spoken in a few inland villages of Espiritu Santo, the largest island of Vanuatu. The author, a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, lived for almost two years (1995-1997) in the village of Navele, where he worked as a biblical 'translation adviser'.

This 70-page book purports to describe the grammar of Merei. Its outline (phonology; noun phrases; verb phrases; clause structure; sentence types; complex sentences) is classic; it is copied explicitly from Lynch, Ross, and Crowley (2002). Following the conclusion, the appendices provide a short interlinearized text; a table listing the 101 texts recorded by the author in the field, of which 31 apparently were transcribed; and finally, a Swadesh-type wordlist based on Tryon (1976), comparing Tryon's Lametin with the two dialects Merei and Tiale. There is no dictionary or lexicon.

For the reader who knows the languages of Vanuatu and especially those of the Santo area, Merei offers no big surprises. Worthy of notice is the existence of aspect clitics whose form is sensitive to the verb's transitivity (p. 30), and of a set of so-called 'directional postclitics' with unusual semantics (p. 44). If Merei has any further original feature, it is not described in this grammar.

It is puzzling how someone with linguistic training – albeit basic – and living 22 months in the same village, can end up writing such a poor grammar. The skimpiness of data, and the lack of any detailed discussion, can be accepted in a few cases – such as when only a short time was spent eliciting data from the few speakers of a dying language; after all, that's what *Pacific Linguistics* wisely created this Shorter Grammars series for. But here the author has no such

excuse. The duration of the fieldwork, the number of recorded and transcribed texts, together with the 'advanced level' of language proficiency claimed by the author himself, should have produced a much better description.

Listing all the flaws and inaccuracies of this grammar would probably take as much space as the grammar itself. Not a single page can be found without problems of all sorts, whether of English language use, language transcription, parsing, glossing or translation, choice of examples, linguistic terminology, grammatical analysis, references, or mere factual accuracy. I will discuss here only a selection of these shortcomings.

The author's poor English should have been edited by a native speaker: 'Let's us not' (p. 44); 'they arrived the home' (p. 59). The wording is often awkward, and sometimes even hard to understand: 'The meaning are marked shown in regular form inside the single quotation marks' (p. xi); 'The compounding of a noun of container with a noun of being contained is common' (p. 21); 'Clitics of directionals can be found in Oceanics' (p. 44). This stylistic flaw becomes an issue when handling linguistic terminology: 'the indirectly possessive noun head' (p. 22); '*ba* marks the futuristic focus of the event' (p. 45); 'The inwards directional is only used to emphasize inwards the undergoers with the verb of reciprocal action' (p. 44).

This leads us to a deeper issue: the misuse of linguistic concepts, and the weakness of the grammatical analysis. Such time adverbs as *yesterday* or *tomorrow* are called 'temporal class nouns' (p. 15), although they share no properties with nouns. The negative existential predicate (*there is no X*) is called a 'negative deictic' (p. 38). The indefinite pronoun *someone* is called 'anonymous demonstrative' (p. 27). The quantifiers *many* and *a few* are called 'noun classifiers' (p. 16). The irrealis mode is wrongly described as 'something that the speaker is sure will not happen or did not happen' (p. 29). A locative predication such as *They are in Bethlehem* is counted as an 'equative clause' (p. 37).

Errors in the segmenting or glossing of examples are pervasive – for example, various morphemes of the form /i/ receive all sorts of wrong glosses (pp. 18, 23, 37, 39, 49, 52). The interlinearized text at the end of the book is filled with inaccuracies – in the Merei forms, in the glosses, and in the translation. The wordlist in the appendix is also riddled with transcription inconsistencies; thus, the word 'yesterday' is spelt *ananop* (p. 15), *anangnop* (p. 43), /*nanannop*/ (p. 69), with no explanation.

Another major weakness is the phonological analysis. The list of phonemes, which was apparently set up using 'a phonological analysis software' (p. 6), would have benefited from the good old method of searching for minimal pairs. The author lists sixteen consonants (p. 7), including a 'rare' phoneme /pm/. The evidence supporting /pm/ is not at all convincing, for example '[lep.me]~[lep.ne] "female"' (notice the syllable break *within* the phoneme!). Of course this is nothing but a consonant cluster, with no phonemic



status; I hardly understand how such a blatant error was not detected by the publisher. Harder to unveil, but still dubious in my view, is the inclusion of /p/ and /j/ as full phonemes; it looks as though these are nothing but syllable-final allophones of /v/ and /i/ respectively. The number of consonants in Merei is thus probably closer to thirteen than to sixteen.

Most of these errors might have been avoided had the author consulted the relevant published sources. Besides overlooking general publications in typology and Oceanic linguistics, Chung also ignores three recent detailed descriptions of languages spoken in the same area: Jauncey (1997) on Tamambo; François (2002) on Araki; and Hyslop (2001) on Ambae.

The final question is whether such a careless grammar deserved to be published. One may think it is always good to have at least some data. Alas, the worst point about the whole book is probably the unreliability of the data itself. Apparently, few of the 234 examples come from an actual corpus of spontaneous speech; instead, most of them are linguist-forged, questionnaire-based, elicited sentences that surely sound as abnormal and dull in Merei as they do in English ('The man lies'; 'The knife is good'; 'He goes to cut'; 'He hits (it)'; 'It rains'; 'I come because of you'). Therefore, this grammar should not be cited by any serious linguist. It is unworthy of such a reputable publisher as Pacific Linguistics.

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Yasuyuki Matsumoto, *Financial fragility and instability in Indonesia*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007, xxvii + 258 pp. ISBN 0415399041. Price: GBP 75.00 (hardback).

DAVID C. COLE  
Harvard University  
dcoleslade@aol.com

This book addresses the conditions leading up to the financial crisis in Indonesia in 1997, attempts to analyse the causes using Hyman Minsky's financial instability hypothesis, and then urges reliance on more stringent foreign capital controls for developing countries such as Indonesia to try to avoid such crises in the future. The most interesting part of the book is the case studies of four large conglomerates – the Salim Group, the Lippo Group, the Sinar Mas Group, and the Gajah Tunggal Group – showing how they managed their finances in the years leading up to the crisis and thereby shedding light on the major financial forces at work during this period.

The essence of the story is that, from 1994 until mid-1997, foreign capital flooded into Indonesia and flowed mainly to the private corporate sector. Neither the Indonesian government nor the domestic financial institutions borrowed at anything like the rate that the private corporate sector did. Foreign capital came in many forms – syndicated loans, equity, direct bank credits, to mention a few – and it was provided on very favourable terms not just to the big conglomerates, but also to many smaller enterprises. The foreign suppliers of capital paid little attention to how the funds were used or the quality of the enterprises in which they were investing. They showed unquestioning confidence not only in continuing high rates of growth, but also in the stability of the political regime, the policies of the Indonesian government, and the exchange rate. On the other hand the leading Indonesian entrepreneurs, mostly Chinese, were much more sensitive to the signs of emerging difficulties, especially the rapid increase in corruption and nepotism on the part of the Soeharto family, and the undermining of financial regulatory institutions. These entrepreneurs used the inflow of foreign capital not just to finance new domestic investment without committing much of their own funds, but also to 'liquidate their own investments' (p. 194). Most of these investments were made offshore, either in financial holdings in Singapore and Hong Kong, or in various enterprises in China and Southeast Asia.

When the crisis hit in the summer of 1997, and the Indonesian authorities freed the exchange rate to protect their foreign exchange reserves, foreign investors rushed to cash out their holdings. But most of the private enterprises in which they had invested had already been stripped of much of their liquidity by their controlling owners, causing defaults on their debts and plummeting equity values.

The author concludes from this experience that 'comprehensive capital controls [are essential] for open and developing countries such as Indonesia until they establish appropriate financial institutions to monitor and manage indebtedness and the volatility of capitalists' behaviour' (p. 199).

The Indonesian government removed most controls over both short- and long-term capital movements between 1966 and 1970 because they were seen as promoting corruption and stifling growth. This very open economic policy contributed to achievement of consistently rapid growth for four decades. Attempts were made in the 1990s to restrain foreign borrowing by state-owned enterprises, but no comparable restrictions were applied to private firms. Given the intimate relationship between the President's family and the leading private conglomerates that were raking in the foreign capital, it is unlikely that imposition of such restrictions in the period leading up to the crisis would have been politically tolerable or practically possible.

The author cites an article by Cole and Slade (1998) as proposing that '[d]eveloping economies should prioritize stable growth rather than fragile and unstable rapid growth associated with free capital movements'. In fact we suggested that Indonesia and the other Asian Crisis countries should consider striving for somewhat slower growth, with less reliance on both foreign and domestic finance, in order to reduce the risk of crises. A recent study by the Asian Development Bank (*Ten years after 2007*) concludes that since the crisis the five crisis countries have in fact had slower growth, lower investment rates, and greater caution on the part of both firms and investors. They have not generally opted for stronger capital controls.

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Mason C. Hoadley, *Public administration; Indonesian norms versus Western forms*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2006, xii + 268 pp. ISBN 9797561386 (paperback)

JAN KEES VAN DONGE  
African Studies Centre, Leiden  
jdonge@ascleiden.nl

The subject of this book is topical. Despite an official doctrine that sees good governance as the key to development, there are high-performing economies, such as the Indonesian one, that have corrupt and often inefficient public management. In this book, Hoadley provides a sweeping historical survey starting from the pre-colonial Javanese kingdoms through Dutch colonialism to the post-independence period: the Orde Lama of Soekarno, the Orde Baru of Soeharto, and the post-1998 political dispensation. The result is a somewhat rambling book that remains impressionistic in character, and often presents more opinion than observation.

The most worthwhile chapter in the book, for me, was the one on the Orde Baru. In it Hoadley comes close to documenting a cultural logic in the interlinked world of politics, military and business. He brings out clearly the authoritarian nature of the regime, for instance in his account of the workings of the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib). However, his use of phrases such as 'the integralist mesh of [...] politics and social order' (p. 129) when referring to the Soeharto period suggests a functionalist interpretation of social order, whereas in fact there is also considerable conflict and repression in this period to be explained. Indeed, Hoadley refers with approval to Lucian Pye's defence of the military as the modernizing agent par excellence: the problem with the Soeharto regime 'lay not in the use of the military model, which has a potential for efficiency', but rather in the fact that the army, in practice, 'fostered and enforced a non-rational interpretation of the rights and wrongs of the Pancasila'. Against this, however, the case could be made that it was precisely the non-rational aspects of the regime's ideology that made it successful in generating social order. Hoadley regards those elements in Indonesian administrative culture that do not accord with Weberian rationality as regrettable aberrations. But this is a questionable assumption, especially in the Indonesian context of rapid economic growth combined with quite notoriously poor governance.

The part of the book dealing with the post-Soeharto period dwells in large part on the issue of decentralization, about which Hoadley says little that is new. There is, however, a most interesting section on conglomerates, state-owned enterprises (BUMN), and cooperatives. According to Hoadley, for a time after the Asian crisis 'the Indonesian state controlled the assets of nearly the entire economy'. However, he also asserts confidently that the restructuring of the economy 'does not provide any model for understanding Indonesian public administration' (p. 162). It seems to me that, on the contrary, the way in which Indonesia weathered the 'typhoon' of 1997 and 1998 may provide an insight into the enigma of economic growth with poor governance. The state interventions following the crisis, and the seemingly arbitrary ways in which debts were written off, may in the end have disrupted the economy much less severely than an approach based on 'good governance'

and meticulous bankruptcy procedures would have done.

The book is regrettably uneven: often the main issues, such as the restructuring after 1997, are left aside, while on the other hand snippets of information suggest tantalizing inroads into understanding Indonesian public administration. For example, a seminar on bureaucratic reform in Banten concluded that 'the province is steered in different degrees by: 1. *Kyai/ulama* from the *peasantrens* and the like; 2. *Jago/juwara* or masters of self-defence, whose influence [...] includes black magic to strengthen their authority over the population; 3. *Preman* or the local criminal/mafia types, the category often overlapping with the former and [...] quite noticeable during the New Order as Pancasila Youth and just plain thugs, [...] now [...] private entrepreneurs who extract up to 30% of project costs in the region; and 4. *Kemanakan tururani* or descendants from the ruling house of Banten' (p. 219). Perhaps if we want to understand Indonesian political and administrative culture, we should start from observations like these, and not so much from historical analysis.

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Samuel S. Dhoraisingam, *Peranakan Indians of Singapore and Melaka*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, xiv + 118 pp. ISBN 9812303464. Price: USD 29.90 (hardback).

JOSEPH M. FERNANDO  
University of Malaya  
jmfernando@um.edu.my

This is an engaging book on a very distinctive and almost forgotten community found in Singapore and Melaka in Malaysia, the Peranakan Indians, who are also known as 'Chitty Melaka'. It provides a revealing insight into the history, culture, traditions and norms of a small but vibrant hybrid community that has retained its unique identity for over 500 years.

The Chitty Melaka emerged as a distinctive community during the Melaka Sultanate in the fifteenth century as a result of South Indian merchants marrying local Malay women. This community is distinct from that of the Chettiars, who came to Malaya in the twentieth century and engaged in the money-lending business and owned rubber plantations. The Chitty Melaka community adopted certain aspects of Malay customs and practices but remained staunch practitioners of saivite Hinduism. Even the onslaught of two European powers, the Portuguese and the Dutch, did not erode their religious convictions and identity. While maintaining contact with their ancestral districts in India, the Chitty have evolved their own distinct rituals, norms and traditions in their new homeland. The language of the Peranakan Indians is a kind of patois known as

Baba Malay, interspersed with Tamil words, that has evolved its own unique identity. This community shares many similarities with the Chinese Peranakan, Malays and Indians in terms of food, dress, jewellery, and footwear.

Most research on Peranakans has focused on the Peranakan Chinese or Baba Nyonya, and this book is a welcome addition to the present literature available on the subject. Interestingly the Peranakan Indians evolved at almost the same time as the Peranakan Chinese, that is during the Melaka Sultanate (1402-1511).

Written in a simple and clear narrative, the book traces the origins of the coming of the Chitty (the term means 'merchants' in Tamil) community to Melaka, and examines the 'survival' of the community under four different powers – the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British, and the Japanese. The later chapters in the book describe the lifestyle and traditions of the Peranakan Indians in the present, and discuss in some detail the major festivals and ceremonies of the community as well as some of its practices relating to fertility, marriage, and death.

The fertility and marriage rituals are particularly interesting, displaying a blend of traditional Hindu elements with some Malay overlay, including the *sarong* and *baju kurung* worn by teenage girls when they undergo the ritual marking puberty. The religious and cultural importance of the rituals and ceremonies is well described, providing the reader with a window into the lives and rituals of the community. The Peranakan Indians in Singapore and Melaka have their own unique festival, called *Thiruvizha* in Tamil or *Istiadat Tahunan Mariamman* in Malaya, held every year over a period of twelve days at the Sri Muthu Mariamman Temple in Jalan Gajah Berang in Melaka.

The book is well illustrated with photographs of the community's socio-cultural gatherings, its temples, and some artifacts from the Chitty Museum in Melaka which give a deeper insight into the history of the community. The reader is transported across time and space as the Chitty community becomes entrenched in both Singapore and Melaka.

On a more academic note, the book raises some interesting historical arguments. It claims, for example, that the Chitty are the 'real descendants of the earliest Indian merchants' in the Malay Archipelago; that they were accorded a special position under the Melaka Sultanate, such that the harbourmaster or Dato Shahbandar was drawn from their ranks; and that the Chitty community enjoyed close relations with the Portuguese. These claims appear to have some historical basis, but it would have been more useful if they were supported by references to primary historical sources or authoritative secondary sources (that the latter have been consulted by the author is clear from the bibliography). Certain groups – the descendants of Indians in the northern state of Kedah in Malaysia, for example – may have different views on some of the historical claims made by Dhoraisingam. A more detailed documentation of the references used, and the various claims therein, would

have elevated the historical and academic value of this useful study to a much higher level. This weakness, nevertheless, does not diminish the historical and ethnographic value of the work as a whole.

Perhaps the most attractive aspect of the book is the story it tells of how the community has struggled, evolved, adapted, and yet retained its exclusive identity through different historical periods when different powers ruled both Melaka and Singapore. This is testimony to the strength and resilience of the colourful Chitty community, and may be a useful point of reference to scholars of minority communities in the present age of globalization. The book is nevertheless also a valuable reference work on a unique but shrinking community, with a rich heritage, that continues to play a significant role in both Malaysia and Singapore today.

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Vatthana Pholsena, *Post-war Laos; The politics of culture, history and identity*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, xiii + 255 pp. ISBN 9812393553, price USD 22.95 (paperback); 9812303561, USD 49.95 (hardback).

VOLKER GRABOWSKY  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster  
grabowsk@uni-muenster.de

Situated at the crossroads of mainland Southeast Asia, Laos is surrounded by five neighbours: China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma (Myanmar). The only landlocked country of the region, it has a population of less than six million living on a territory almost as large as that of the United Kingdom. Despite its small size and low population density, Laos is one of the ethnically and culturally most heterogeneous nations in Asia. Vatthana Pholsena's book, a revision of her PhD thesis submitted to the University of Hull in 2002, is an insightful and thoroughly researched study of the politics of nationalism and ethnicity in post-socialist Laos. Vatthana's multi-disciplinary approach combines ethnographic fieldwork with solid historical research and theoretical reflections on nationalism, ethnicity, and cultural identity. Reviewing the previous contributions to this area of study by scholars like Grant Evans, Martin Stuart-Fox, and Frank Proschan, the author deplores the fact that most recent studies of Lao nationalism and ethnicity have failed to view the non-ethnic Lao peoples, or at least their elites, as political actors with their own perceptions of Lao nationhood. Vatthana tries to overcome this shortcoming in two ways. Firstly, she analyses nationalist ideology as a discourse of power against the background of the majority-minority relationship. Secondly, she integrates educated members of ethnic minorities into an ethnography of Lao nationalism.



The author first discusses the impact of French colonial rule on the awakening of an ethnic identity amongst the diverse autochthonous Mon-Khmer-speaking populations, colloquially called 'Kha' (literally meaning serf or slave). Vatthana points out that the French transformed this Lao term, which 'originally referred to a class and social representation', into a collective ethnic category to serve administrative and political purposes (pp. 27-8). Whereas the policies of the French administration apparently deepened the ethnic divide between lowlanders and highlanders, the pre-colonial Lao elite is given credit for having 'little interest in assimilating the upland population', and therefore refraining from any 'systematic and institutionalized policies [...] to draw the upland peoples into a unitary culture, which would have been that of the ethnic Lao' (p. 21). Moreover, the author doubts whether any ethnic identity that went beyond 'the level of the village or a cluster of villages' existed among the highlanders before the arrival of the French (p. 35). However, the 'Kha' revolts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries against local Lao rulers, notably on the Boloven Plateau, demonstrate that the highlanders were indeed capable of large-scale coordinated political action based on a common ethnic consciousness.

When the Communists gained victory in the civil war and founded the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) in December 1975, they proclaimed equal civil rights for all citizens regardless of their ethnic background. After the collapse of socialist regimes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the Lao revolutionaries were searching for a new political legitimacy and began to emphasize the heritage of the ancient kingdom of Lan Sang. This polity, founded by King Fa Ngum in the mid-fourteenth century, was deeply embedded in the culture of the ethnic Lao. Not surprisingly, Buddhism is nowadays given a prominent place in state affairs. The present Lao regime, Vatthana acutely suggests, may hope that by promoting Buddhism and other features of ethnic Lao culture, it can construct a post-colonial nation based on cultural distinctiveness (p. 72). This does not mean that the Lao Communists have turned to a purely ethnic nationalism. The concept of national identity advocated in the LPDR is apparently a combination of civic and ethnic nationalism. This assessment is based upon an in-depth analysis of the *Pavatsat Lao*, the most authoritative work on Lao history which, published in 2000, has become a major reference work within official and academic circles, and will certainly influence future editions of history textbooks. The *Pavatsat Lao* develops the idea of an autonomous and autochthonous history of Laos to which all ethnic groups have made important contributions. 'Lao' autochthony is expanded not only to the northeast of Thailand (Isan), where four-fifths of all ethnic Lao live, but also to the Kingdom of Thailand's upper north (Lan Na). Such an approach is not without pitfalls as it could easily give rise to a Lao irredentism somewhere in the not-so-distant future.

In her excellent discussion of ethnic classifications and the mapping of nationhood, Vatthana shows how the socialist regime seeks to manipulate



ethnicity in order to serve its civilizing project of building a united and modern nation. The official party policy, however, is subtly countered by educated and politically influential members of ethnic minorities who insist on the writing of a 'history of the ethnic groups in Laos' to put the 'history of the Lao nation' in perspective (p. 113). Their efforts to create larger ethnic categories (such as the Bru) that encompass smaller, linguistically related groups will possibly reinforce a perspective which gives ethnic minorities a larger role in a national history of Laos.

*Post-war Laos* is a major contribution to the study of national and ethnic identity in contemporary Laos. Moreover, the book also addresses general issues pertaining to nationhood in Southeast Asia. Vatthana Pholsena concludes her fascinating study with the pessimistic assessment that 'the current regime's obsession with state control of ethnic identity and its approach to national development and national identity, do not provide propitious conditions for the emergence of a liberal conception of multiculturalism' (p. 222). Whether or not such a conception is considered desirable by younger generations of Lao is a different question.

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Gert Oostindie, *De parels en de kroon; Het koningshuis en de koloniën*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2006, 192 pp. ISBN 9023422554. Price EUR 19.90 (hardback).

HANS HÄGERDAL  
Växjö University  
hans.hagerdal@vxu.se

The role of monarchy in modern constitutional states may at first glance appear to be a quirky topic for a serious book-length text. It inevitably evokes images of stiff state ceremonies, marital affairs eagerly covered by gossip weekly magazines, and the like. The lack of executive political power among modern European royals does not detract from their usefulness as symbolic ammunition in a variety of contexts; on the contrary. As demonstrated by Gert Oostindie's book, the Dutch monarchy has performed a succession of roles in relation to the overseas possessions of the Netherlands, sometimes in the direct interest of the colonized groups themselves. This was in spite of the physical remoteness of the House of Orange; as is well known, no king or queen, let alone stadhouder, ever visited the colonies in the east, and only in recent times have monarchs started to pay visits to the West Indies.

Gert Oostindie seems well placed to make sense of this story, being a historian of the West Indies and the director of a research institute (KITLV) that is mostly concerned with Southeast Asia. The volume he has penned is a

relatively slim one, with 142 pages of running text divided into thirteen brief chapters. The age of the stadhouders (up to 1795) is treated summarily for the simple reason that their importance for the early colonial enterprise was limited. The Oranjes did of course have stakes in the VOC and WIC as trading companies; but they hardly directed company policy. In their correspondence with Asian rulers, VOC officials seldom referred to the symbol of stadhouder-ship. Instead, indigenous rajas would address *Tuan Bangsawan Yang Mulia Gubernurador Djindral dan Tuan Raden van India* – the Governor-General (in Batavia) and his council. This situation, one might add, was very different from that of the rival Portuguese colonial enterprise, in which the king was always held up as a sacred symbol important to relations with the colonized peoples. The situation changed drastically with the installation in 1815 of an Orange crown with extensive ruling powers. While the West Indian colonies were comparatively marginal, the Dutch East Indies generated considerable profit, part of which found its way into the personal chests of the king. None of the three reigning Willems appears to have been overly interested in the philanthropic side of the matter; on issues such as the slavery in which the majority of the West Indies population still lingered, or the abuses of the *Cultuurstelsel*, they remained silent. It is doubtful whether the fickle Willem III ever found it worth the effort to read *Max Havelaar*. Nevertheless, the belated emancipation of slavery in the colonies in 1861-1863 was presented by the authorities as an expression of graceful royal intervention. In the Dutch West Indies (the number of emancipated slaves in the East Indies was comparatively small), this fiction was propagated in patriotic songs.

The liberal constitution initiated by Thorbecke in 1848 made a hasty end to royal authoritarian rule, and the queens reigning in succession after 1890 were obviously powerful symbols rather than having a personal influence on colonial matters. As such, they were by no means unimportant. After the death of the unpopular Willem III, the symbolic position of the monarchy was strengthened, at the same time as Dutch rule was thoroughly imposed throughout the Indonesian archipelago. In contrast to the West Indian situation, in Indonesia there was not much cultural affinity with the Netherlands. Relatively few people could speak Dutch, and the lives of most were strongly influenced by indigenous traditions (*adat*). Oostindie makes the apposite observation that royal symbolism constituted a splendid instrument with which to make visible an imagined relationship between colonizer and colonized. The figure of the monarch was made visible by the colonial authorities in a number of ways, from schoolbooks to jubilees to place names. Still, Queen Wilhelmina (reign 1898-1948) never undertook a visit to the overseas possessions, in spite of rapidly improving health and travel facilities. The excuses given included family concerns and tropical heat, but according to Oostindie there were deeper matters at stake. A physical appearance of the queen might

dispel some of the mysticism associated with this remote figure. One newspaper rudely remarked that a meeting with the queen, given her lack of physical attractiveness, might turn out to be a disappointment for the Javanese!

With the demise of the Dutch possessions in Southeast Asia after World War II, the country was left with Surinam and six islands in the Antilles. Whatever Indonesian attachment there might have been to the House of Orange vanished rapidly and left few traces. This is rather different in the case of Surinam, the troubled history of which since independence in 1975 has underpinned a degree of 'Oranje nostalgia'. And on the six Dutch islands of the Antilles – the last remains of a once far-flung colonial empire – the queen still plays an important role. Many islanders appear to desire the queen to mediate between themselves and the unperceptive bureaucrats in The Hague, who are suspected of wishing to abandon the six islands to their fate. In this way, Queen Beatrix becomes the symbol of a desirable unity between the 'motherland' and the overseas territories.

The book is nicely illustrated, sometimes with rare photographs. A few maps would not have been out of place; readers who are acquainted with the geography of Curaçao might have problems locating Salatiga. Overall, Oostindie manages to strike a functional balance between analysis and popular narrative. Nevertheless, there is definitely more to be said on the issue of monarchy as a colonial symbol. Comparisons with other monarchies with colonizing pasts could have illuminated the matter further. A more theoretical approach to the transmission and use of historical symbolism could also have added to the usefulness of the book for a scholarly audience. Finally, it is obvious that Oostindie feels more at home in the West Indies than in Southeast Asian waters. His discussions regarding the Dutch relationship with Suriname and the Antilles appear richer and more confident than what he writes about the East Indies. With these reservations, I find the book well worth reading.

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Jean-Luc Maurer, *Les Javanais du Caillou; Des affres de l'exil aux aléas de l'intégration; Sociologie historique de la communauté indonésienne de Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Paris: Association Archipel, 2006, 367 pp. [Cahier d'Archipel 35.] ISBN 2-910513-47-5. Price: EUR 30.00 (paperback).

MENNO HEKKER  
The Hague  
m.hekker@hetnet.nl

Emigration from overpopulated Java was a well-known phenomenon during the Orde Baru of President Soeharto, but actually dates back to the colonial

era. Before the end of the nineteenth century, the Dutch administration had already begun to stimulate emigration from Java. This migration was not restricted to resettlement in other, less densely populated parts of the Netherlands East Indies. Some Javanese settled in Surinam (South America), also a Dutch colony. Between 1896 and 1955, around 20,000 Javanese also emigrated to the French colony of New Caledonia in Melanesia. Of these, the majority ultimately returned to Indonesia. Jean-Luc Maurer has documented this labour migration. His aim is to produce a social history of the Javanese community in New Caledonia, based on the well-known 'push and pull' model, with special attention to the social integration and cultural identity of the Javanese migrants. Maurer's research is based on published sources as well as on a survey and interviews in New Caledonia and Indonesia.

The emigration to New Caledonia, or 'Le Caillou' as it is called by its inhabitants, resulted from push and pull factors in Java and New Caledonia. Nineteenth-century Java was overpopulated. There was a shortage of land for its peasant population and, in the final years of the century, there was an economic recession. In addition there was a moral crisis resulting from the disintegration of traditional social structures, with old institutions losing their importance in the face of the increasing influence of Dutch colonial rule. New Caledonia became a French colony in 1853. French colonists settled there, but initially their exploitation of the islands was no success, not least because of inadequate labour supply. Consequently it was decided to recruit Javanese labourers, with the help of the Netherlands Indies administration, for settlement in New Caledonia. The migration was not altogether voluntary. Illiterate Javanese labourers and landless peasants were often easy prey for the recruiting offices of Dutch trading companies, which used harsh and manipulative methods. The majority of the migrants came from the poorest and most overpopulated areas of Java, and had hardly any other choice. The Dutch and French colonial governments supported and authorized this more or less forced labour migration, in collaboration with private companies. All this resulted in harsh labour conditions for the Javanese.

As Maurer describes in detail, the migration pattern fluctuated according to economic and political developments in the Netherlands East Indies and in French New Caledonia. The Javanese came to New Caledonia as indentured labourers, and the majority indeed returned to Java when their contract period ended. The Second World War, when United States armed forces were based in New Caledonia, and the immediate postwar years up to 1950, were the best periods for the migrants, as for New Caledonia in general. The presence of US forces caused the economy to flourish, while social and health conditions also improved greatly for the Javanese. After 1950 the economic situation unfortunately deteriorated, and many Javanese repatriated to Indonesia. There they were not really welcomed with open arms, because they had not

experienced the suffering endured by other Indonesians during the Japanese occupation. Partly for this reason, some of the returning migrants quickly left Java once more, often for South Sumatra.

In the end, only a few thousand Javanese stayed permanently in New Caledonia after 1955; in 1996 the Javanese community numbered about 5,000 persons, 2.5 percent of the New Caledonian population. In the 1960s, the New Caledonian economy flourished again because of nickel mining. Demographic, economic and political conditions changed. Tensions arose between the original inhabitants, the Kanaks, and the various immigrant groups. This culminated in social and political conflicts in the mid-1980s, independence from France being the main issue. The Javanese population managed to survive by keeping a low profile. Among the Javanese who stayed in New Caledonia, social mobility emerged. The Javanese gradually moved from the countryside to the city and from agricultural labour to more skilled jobs, especially in the garage and transport business. They also benefited from the overall improved standard of living. So, coming from an agricultural and proletarian background, they now belonged to the urban middle class. However, notwithstanding their improved economic conditions, the Javanese still did not play a substantial role in politics, and their social integration succeeded at the expense of their cultural identity. In the two final chapters, Maurer presents demographic data on the Javanese of New Caledonia today, and describes their organizations, their position in the host society, and their cultural situation.

The book is not easy reading. It pours forth a massive number of facts, especially on economic and political circumstances, and the reader needs a high level of concentration to follow the story through the many events, politicians, leading figures, organizations, and political parties. Sometimes statistics are presented in text form instead of in tables or charts, which makes it particularly difficult to get the general idea. It is debatable whether all the data presented are really relevant to Maurer's argument. The book would have gained greatly in readability and value if the truly relevant data had been pre-selected, and more attention had been paid to constructing a sharp analysis. Probably the book is so exhaustive partly because it is intended as a chronicle of the Javanese migration, dedicated to the Javanese migrants themselves.

Maurer is heavily oriented towards the economic and political dimensions of the migration of the Javanese to New Caledonia. In that respect he has delivered a thorough piece of work, one that presents a very detailed description of all political and economic factors that led to or influenced the migration, in Indonesia as well as in New Caledonia. However, Maurer is not at his best in describing and analysing the sociological and cultural dimensions. The book is presented as a social history, but sociological and cultural issues are not really treated in a systematic way, and the perspective of the migrants

themselves is reflected weakly. The sociological data consist largely of quantitative demographic data and data on Javanese organizations. Information on the life and times of the Javanese migrants themselves is presented primarily in case studies, scattered throughout the text in separate boxes. These case studies contain life histories intended to be representative of particular categories of migrants. To be fair, Maurer often shows sympathy for the Javanese migrants by highlighting the difficult circumstances under which they left Java and had to build up a new existence elsewhere. But the analysis of the assimilation process, and especially of Javanese culture and culture change, is superficial. Consequently, the book is rather one-dimensional as far as the migrants and their life in New Caledonia is concerned.

In conclusion, Maurer has written a history of Javanese labour migration to New Caledonia. The result is a thorough piece of work as far as factual data on the economic and political dimensions of the issue are concerned, but the reader must not expect a truly sociological, still less ethnographic, study of the New Caledonian Javanese. Be that as it may, Maurer has recorded the Javanese migration to New Caledonia, thereby helping to ensure that the fate of these migrants will not be forgotten.

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Richard Stubbs, *Rethinking Asia's economic miracle; The political economy of war, prosperity and crisis*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, xii + 276 pp. ISBN 0333964608 (hardback), price GBP 60.00; 0333964616, GBP 20.99 (paperback).

DAVID HENLEY  
Royal Netherlands Institute of  
Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden  
henley@kitlv.nl

In the second half of the twentieth century, East and Southeast Asia contained the most dynamic and successful set of economies in the world. This same region was also the scene of a whole series of wars, starting with the Second World War and continuing through the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and a succession of local guerilla conflicts such as the Malayan Emergency, all linked with the global confrontation between the capitalist and communist superpowers. In *Rethinking Asia's economic miracle*, political scientist Richard Stubbs argues that these two circumstances were closely related: war itself, paradoxically, has been the mother of East and Southeast Asian prosperity.

In this region, Stubbs points out, the Cold War quickly turned hotter than in any other part of the world, concentrating the minds of political elites



on the pressing business of personal and national survival. The result was 'the buildup of the state's administrative and coercive capacity in order to mobilize resources and confront the communist threat'. A key element in this mobilization was the pursuit of broadly based economic growth: from South Korea to Singapore, a sound economy 'was recognized to be not only a critical factor in assembling a strong military, but was also, in itself, a way of ensuring that communism's appeal went unheeded' (p. 221). A second beneficial effect of the conflict situation was that in their efforts to achieve rapid economic growth, pro-Western governments were aided by 'war-induced waves of capital that flooded East and Southeast Asia': an exodus of private capital from mainland China; American government aid, military spending, and stockpiling of resources such as rubber and tin; and later Japanese direct investment and strategic aid (p. 228). The strategic importance of the region, thirdly, induced the USA to open its markets to East and Southeast Asian exports without demanding that the exporting countries abandoned the use of protective trade policies as components of their own growth strategies.

Some elements of this argument are less convincing than others. The emphasis on industrial protectionism and the strategic dispensation to pursue it may be justified as far as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are concerned, but does not ring very true in the cases of Thailand or Malaysia, still less Singapore or Hong Kong. In Southeast Asia, as the World Bank's *East Asian Miracle* report points out, protective policies have played generally minor and often counterproductive roles in industrialization (*East Asian Miracle* 1993:7). Any suggestion that large volumes of foreign aid are the key to economic growth, moreover, is all too clearly refuted by the experience of Sub-Saharan Africa and other aid-addicted parts of the developing world (Easterly 2006). By most accounts, South Vietnam before 1975 was no advertisement for aid-based development either.

Stubbs, to be fair, acknowledges that 'capital inflows by themselves do not guarantee economic prosperity', and that the real key is 'the ability of the state to harness the inflow of capital and put it to productive use' (p. 299). It is here that the real strength of his story lies. Stubbs gives a convincing account of how in many East and Southeast Asian countries, it was above all the threat of invasion or subversion that galvanized habitually fractious and self-seeking political elites to unite and cooperate in the serious pursuit of prosperity – prosperity not only for themselves, but also for the mass of the population, which they needed to defend and support them, and above all not to turn against them. In political terms, it can be said, the distinctive feature of the East Asian miracle is the 'growth coalition': a pragmatic alliance of government, business, and popular interests, often coordinated by authoritarian means and radically hostile to those political forces which it does not encompass, but nevertheless broad in its appeal, and based internally on a consensus that shared economic growth is possible and will benefit all sec-



tions of society. In many countries the threat of war and/or revolution was undoubtedly conducive to the emergence of such a coalition. In this connection it is remarkable that Stubbs does not refer to an illuminating 1996 book by Jose Campos and Hilton Root which reaches very similar conclusions:

The Asian miracle was built on a broad consensus that the need for rapid economic growth was so urgent that it justified mobilizing the entire society as if for war. China had just witnessed the greatest peasant revolution in world history, and no country in the region felt safe from the threat of similar political upheaval. [...] In fact, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore were sufficiently vulnerable to political risk to warrant the reputation of being among the least likely of developing nations to succeed. But leaders in these countries as well as in the other high performers understood that failing to deliver economic development meant more than just losing an election. (Hilton and Root 1996:176-7.)

Another somewhat puzzling aspect of *Rethinking Asia's economic miracle* is that the seven countries which it looks at in some detail – Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand – do not include Indonesia. Stubbs excludes this country on two grounds: that 'Indonesia's low per capita income does not put it in the category of an NIE or even a near-NIE', and that even in the 1990s 'its economy was still heavily reliant on the extraction and export of raw materials' (p. 23). Neither of these arguments, however, is very convincing. Income is not in itself a measure of industrialization, and raw material exports long remained almost as important to Malaysia, which Stubbs does include in the 'miracle' category, as they did to Indonesia. In Malaysia the proportion of total merchandise exports consisting of manufactures first exceeded 50 percent in 1990; in Indonesia it did so just three years later in 1993.<sup>1</sup> In terms of sustained growth performance, moreover, Indonesia belongs firmly among the Asian Tigers, albeit starting its rise from a much lower base and at a rather later date – 1966 – than some of its neighbours.

The exclusion of Indonesia is doubly mysterious given that on the whole its history seems to support, rather than contradict, Stubbs's argument. Before 1966, it is true, Indonesia's position with respect to the Cold War did differ from that of the countries included in his study. It is also true that after that date there was no *immediate* threat of invasion or revolution, the Indonesian Communist Party having been destroyed in the massacres accompanying Soeharto's rise to power. Nevertheless, the successful development policies of the New Order undoubtedly reflected the same acute concern for national security which Stubbs identifies as the key to growth elsewhere. Moreover, those policies were paid for partly by the same kind of strategically motivated Western aid that helped fuel growth in the other pro-Western countries of the region.

<sup>1</sup> World Development Indicators Online. World Bank electronic database. Access by subscription ([www.worldbank.org/data/onlinebases/onlinebases.html](http://www.worldbank.org/data/onlinebases/onlinebases.html)).

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Herman Th. Verstappen, *Zwerftocht door een wereld in beweging*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 2006, 164 pp. ISBN 9023242297. Price: EUR 19.50 (paperback).

SJOERD R. JAARSMA  
 Papua Heritage Foundation, Utrecht  
 s.jaarsma@papuaerfgoed.org

Starting out in the first days of World War II and ending with some general observations on present-day globalization, *Zwerftocht door een wereld in beweging* (loosely translated: 'Wanderings through a changing world') sketches parts of Herman Verstappen's life and career. The book is no straightforward autobiography, though. From a description of Verstappen's years as a student during the war and in the late 1940s, it develops into a pastiche of brief essays on his experiences as a fieldworker in Indonesia, Papua, and Africa.

The main body of the book (Chapters 2–10) deals with a variety of field trips and expeditions in Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, the Moluccas) and Papua (Wissel Lakes, Bird's Head area, Star Mountains). The time frame throughout this part of the book is the same: the late 1940s and 1950s. All essays are structured in the same way. We meet the people Verstappen works with during his field trip, there is a vivid description of the scenery, and occasionally the events of the trip itself. Overall, we are told little of the purpose of the various trips; most of the work involves either mapping or geological surveys. This is one of the main deficiencies of the book: it is not really very informative. In many respects it is a book written for people already familiar with the settings and the scenery. In that respect the chapter on the Star Mountains gained a lot in depth and meaning for me, because in this case I could recognize people and scenery both from things I had read elsewhere, and from personal acquaintance.

Two of the final three chapters differ from the easy-going narrative

characteristic of the main part of the book. Chapter 11, entitled 'Verder de wereld rond' ('Further around the world'), although still containing several anecdotes relating to Verstappen's fieldwork, also gives extensive attention to the evolving debate on the growing abuse of natural resources in the world. Verstappen summarizes contributions to this debate by his own institute (presently called the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation), and by various international organizations. In the thirteenth and final chapter, 'Op weg naar morgen' ('On the road to tomorrow'), Verstappen philosophizes on past, present, and future developments in the world. His key message relates to the interdependency between all natural and social processes. He sees change (including globalization) as inevitable, though it needs to be managed in a sensible manner that safeguards social justice and human welfare.

Overall, this book provides a nice way to pass an evening reading by the fireside. Verstappen is definitively an accomplished storyteller. His field anecdotes are colourful, often humorous, and contain enough local terminology (all dutifully explained at the end of each chapter) to provide a sense of realism. Nevertheless, beyond the level of storytelling the book lacks depth. We do not really get to know Verstappen himself, nor do we learn that much about his work, views, and motivations. In these particular respects I consider the book a missed opportunity. Although I enjoyed reading it, it also left me slightly dissatisfied.

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Klokke, A.H. (editor and translator), *Fishing, hunting and headhunting in the former culture of the Ngaju Dayak in Central Kalimantan; Notes from the manuscripts of the Ngaju Dayak authors Numan Kunum and Ison Birim; from the Legacy of Dr. H. Schaerer; With a recent additional chapter on hunting by Katuah Mia*. Phillips, Maine: Borneo Research Council, 2004, 232 pp. ISBN 1929900058. Price: USD 39.00 (paperback).

MONICA JANOWSKI  
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London  
mj11@soas.ac.uk

In 1949, A.H. Klokke became District Medical Officer at the hospital in Kuala Kapuas where Hans Schaerer had carried out part of his research. The texts included in this book are associated with the legacy of Schaerer. One section, by Numan Kunum, is on 'Fishing among the Dayak'; there are two sections entitled 'Hunting animals among the Dayak', one by Numan Kunum and one

by Katuah Mia; and one section, by Ison Birim, is entitled 'The story about headhunting'. The texts by Numan Kunum, a teacher at Tumbang Lahang, were written in 1939 at Hans Schaerer's request and left at the mission hospital at which Klokke worked at Kuala Kapuas, where he found them. Since Numan Kunum's text on hunting was brief, Klokke sought another Ngaju informant, Katuah Mia from Kuala Kuron, to write some additional text (in 2002) on the same subject for this publication (note that Katuah Mia is listed as Katuah Mai in the table of contents, but is referred to more than once by Klokke in his introduction as Katuah Mia). Isom Birim, a Ngaju pastor, wrote the section on headhunting at Schaerer's request in 1938. Birim had not however handed it over to Schaerer before Schaerer left in 1939; he gave it to Klokke 15 years later. Konstantin Mia, Katuah Mia's brother, has provided drawings for all the chapters in the book. All of the texts are provided in both the Ngaju original and in English translation. The English translation could have benefited from some proofreading and correction.

The text on fishing written by Numan Kunum is a detailed account of all the different methods used for fishing, both individual and communal. There is an interesting section on what is often called tuba fishing, using the root of *Derris elliptica Benth.* to dope the fish, including a description of the rituals and magic associated with this.

The two sections on hunting, written far apart in time (1938 and 2002), provide a good deal of information on the methods used to hunt both land animals and birds, but it is a pity that the question of how hunting methods may have changed in nearly 40 years is not directly addressed. Katuah Mia provides an interesting discussion of methods for ensuring hunting success, including the use of a method of calculating the best time to go hunting called 'the five times'.

The section on headhunting is a valuable addition to the literature on headhunting in Southeast Asia, as a contribution by a native writer. Isom Birim states that in headhunting there is reliance on the 'village guardian' (*pataho*) and the 'predicting hawk' (*antang*) for ensuring success. Klokke points out that these notions continue to be important at the time of publication, including (as Appendix 1) an extract of a letter written on 19 June 2001 by an unnamed Ngaju Dayak, stating that the *antang* (hawk) and *pataho* (village guardian) have given the Dayak the power to chase the Madurese (transmigrants) 'back to Java'.

Klokke also includes two other appendices. Appendix 2, 'A list of fish from Central Kalimantan', is the identification (by Katuah Mia) by their Ngaju Dayak names of fish from the book *Ikan air tawar Indonesia Bagian Barat dan Sulawesi – Fresh water fishes of Western Indonesia and Sulawesi*, by M. Kottelat, A.J. Whitten, Sri Nurani Kartikasari and Sutikho Wirjoatmodjo (Jakarta: Periplus, 1993). Appendix 3, 'List of birds in Central Kalimantan', is the identi-

fication (by Katuah Mia and the village chief Sumbin Sahuy) by their Ngaju Dayak names of birds from the book *A field guide to the birds of Borneo, Sumatra and Bali*, by J. MacKinnon and K. Phillipps (Oxford University Press, 2001). Klokke notes, from his discussions about birds with these informants, that the use of birds as predictors of the future seems to be still alive among the Ngaju in the early twenty-first century.

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Ian Proudfoot, *Old Muslim calendars of Southeast Asia*. Leiden: Brill, 2006, ix + 135 pp. [Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 3 (South-East Asia), Vol. 17.] ISBN 9004154140. Price: EUR 79.00 (hardback; with CD-ROM).

NICO J.G. KAPTEIN

This short delicate book on pre-twentieth-century calendars in Southeast Asia is based on meticulous research and contains a mass of information. Javanese Muslim calendars have received ample scholarly attention, but in the Malay world the strength of the Muslim reformist attack on all local practices from the early twentieth century onwards has resulted in the fading away of local styles of dating, making research on the topic difficult. The absence of a well-developed scholarly tradition in this field of study for the Malay world has led to an assumption that divergences ('mistakes') in particular historical dates can be explained by incompetence and indifference on the part of the Malays who used the dates in question. On closer examination, however, it appears that in fact there have been various Muslim calendars in operation in the archipelago simultaneously. This viewpoint forms the starting point for Proudfoot's book. The book is based on empirical evidence taken mainly from Malay handwritten materials (including some manuscripts on divination), while Javanese materials are drawn only from secondary sources.

In the first chapter the author deals in detail with the Muslim calendar, which is based on two principles: 1. that a year consists of 12 lunar months (of 29 or 30 days each) and that it is not permitted to intercalate extra time to keep the calendar in pace with the solar cycle (and therefore with the seasons); 2. that the month begins with the appearance of a new moon, which should be confirmed by the actual sighting of the new moon, an event called *ru'yah*. A cloudy sky could make it impossible to see the new moon, in which case the new month would start a day later when the month was 'full' – that is, after 30 days (but never more) counting from the beginning of the month. As a result of this second principle the lunar calendar was not precisely predictable, and local variation was great.

In order to predict future dates – for instance, the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan in the next year – all kinds of methods were developed for the calculation (*hisâb*) of the likely visibility of the new moon. Moreover, in order to keep the lunar calendar in line with the phases of the moon a leap day was added roughly once every three years. For this there are two systems: the trigesimal or 30-year calendar in which each 30-year cycle has 11 leap years, and the octaval calendar in which an eight-year cycle contains three leap years. In the octaval calendar, each year has a particular letter (Malay *huruf*) attached to it, also called the signature of the year. The eight letters follow the sequence *alif*; *hâ'*; *jîm*; *zâ'*; *dâl* (*awwal*); *bâ*; *waw*; *dâl* (*âkhir*) – together forming the nonsense word *ahjaz dabuwda*. These letters also have numerical values which can be used for fixing the weekday with which the year begins, and which were also used in magical practices. Moreover, using the year letter in combination with the month letters that also exist, it is possible to calculate the weekday of any other date in this year. It is this octaval calendar, in several variants, which was most common in Southeast Asia.

In the second chapter, on the basis of data taken from Malay sources dating variously from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century, Proudfoot studies how the old octaval calendars worked. These data consist of 1,700 dates which include day, month, and year with a *huruf*, or the weekday, or both. They were gathered, according to a note preceding the bibliography, from sources 'too numerous to include in this listing' (p. 125). It is shown that when the calendar was lagging behind the appearance of the new moon, it could be adjusted by changing the signature of the year, or by starting to count from a different weekday in the octaval sequence (Proudfoot calls this 'recalibration').

In Chapter 3, using three case studies, Proudfoot demonstrates that the calendars used in Bima, Johor-Riau and Aceh were octaval, but that even within a single locality they were not used uniformly. Interestingly, the use of different variants of the calendars was related to differences in commercial, cultural and political affinity. In Aceh at the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, the pattern of adherence to competing calendar systems was linked to the pattern of competition between the Ulama and the Teungkus.

Chapter 4 identifies three geographic clusters within each of which approximately the same style of calendar was in use: 1. the Malay states of the peninsula and the Johor-Riau region; 2. the central Javanese kingdoms; (3) the north coast of Java, or western Pasisir. Proudfoot expresses his expectation that with more new data, a detailed map showing the distribution of calendar styles will one day be drawn.

In Chapter 5 the author deals with the calendar of Central Java, which follows the octaval model (the octave being called *windu*) but nevertheless differs from the older Malay system. In a painstaking analysis, Proudfoot demonstrates how the Javanese calendrical system came about as the result of extending and/or replacing older systems.



Chapter 6 is entitled 'Dates that do not conform'. It looks at dates, as recorded in historical sources, which do not conform to the rules of the octaval calendars – for instance, dates which indicate a signature or weekday that according to the calculation is incorrect. The conclusion of this chapter is that the signature does not guarantee that the date can be calculated accordingly.

In Chapter 7, based on his collection of data, Proudfoot shows that by the end of the nineteenth century the octaval calendar was passing into oblivion. Interestingly, this conforms to C. Snouck Hurgronje's remark that by this period *ru'yah* was gaining popularity in the archipelago under Meccan and Hadrami influence.

In the interesting Epilogue, this gradual disappearance of the octaval calendar is linked to the rise of printing (another of Proudfoot's fields of expertise). With the appearance of all kinds of printed works, such as newspapers and almanacs, uniform calendrical practices were promoted at the expense of local practices. Debates between the traditionalists and the reformists on the issue, and a greater awareness of the requirements of Islamic law, hastened the eclipse of the octaval calendar, which nowadays survives only in Java where it is used for ritual and magic purposes.

The book ends with five useful appendices, dealing respectively with the numerical value of letters; with calendrical adjustments; with two descriptions of the octaval calendar from an eighteenth-century Palembang manuscript; with two octaval calendars from outside Southeast Asia (Central Asia and Turkey); and with the conversion of dates. This last appendix also includes a manual to the very convenient CD-ROM which accompanies the book, and which contains a programme entitled 'Takwim', which provides a tool to convert dates to and from different calendars: the Christian (Gregorian and Julian), the Muslim (according to a number of versions), and the Javanese (again according to a number of versions, and also including the different names of the weekday).

*Old Muslim calendars of Southeast Asia* is written in a condensed but clear style and forms an intriguing piece of scholarly work. It should be regarded primarily as a contribution to the history of science in the Malay world, although the accompanying CD-ROM is also a very handy practical instrument for converting historical data. As mentioned, the book is based on indications of dating taken from all kinds of historical documents. While others would have taken the inconsistencies in these empirical data for granted, Ian Proudfoot has had the great courage to attempt to make sense of this chaos, and he has succeeded in an admirable and scholarly way. In the first place he has mustered an abundance of empirical data, collected in a highly disciplined manner (and presumably over a long period of time). Secondly, he has also revealed in a most sophisticated manner the underlying principles which must have been at work. The result is a very original book which has laid the groundwork for further studies in this field.

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Garry Rodan, *Transparency and authoritarian rule in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge, 2005, xvii + 261 pp. ISBN 0415374162. Price: GBP 60.00 (paperback).

SOE TJEN MARCHING  
Oxford University  
smarching@yahoo.com

When the economic crisis hit East and Southeast Asia in 1997-1998, many critics were quick to claim that the authoritarian governments and lack of political transparency in the countries of those regions had been the causes of the financial collapse. Liberal politics and freedom of information, it was argued, go hand in hand with economic success. This has become a new mantra, especially in pro-globalization circles where it is taken for granted that the free market augments democracy and political openness. Among those who emphasized the need for change and political transparency in this period was Anwar Ibrahim, then Deputy Prime Minister (and Finance Minister) of Malaysia.

Gary Rodan, however, uses empirical studies of Malaysia and Singapore to show that political transparency can be interpreted differently, and that a free market is no guarantee of democracy. Economic freedom does not equate to a free contest for political power, or to a free market in information. Singapore and Malaysia have authoritarian governments which show strong similarities in their techniques of rule. The censorship of mass media, for instance, is severe in both countries, and the rulers of both have used religious, family and ethnic values to justify their power. Rodan also challenges the optimistic view that the internet will promote democracy in Southeast Asia. When Indonesia was experiencing political revolution in 1998, he concedes, the internet served as a liberating technology. In Singapore and Malaysia, however, it is used for purposes of surveillance as well as to circulate information.

Rodan's use of interviews with various figures in Malaysia and Singapore, and of material from newspapers, magazines, and other secondary sources, is very impressive. The book is well-written, and detailed in its analysis of the relationship between transparency and authoritarian rule in Malaysia and Singapore. It is also timely, given the economic and political changes which have been happening in Southeast Asia recently.

On page 19, Rodan states that in 1961 a splinter group broke away from Singapore's PAP (People's Action Party) to form the Barisan Nasional (National Front). In fact the breakaway group was the Barisan Sosialis or Socialist Front; the Barisan Nasional is the ruling coalition in Malaysia. Nevertheless, this is merely a minor blemish when compared with the importance of the book as a whole.

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Greg Fealy and Virginia Hooker (eds), *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia; A contemporary sourcebook*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006, li + 540 pp. ISBN 9812303677, price USD 29.90 (paperback); 9812303685, USD 49.90 (hardback).

DICK VAN DER MEIJ

Leiden University / Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University, Jakarta  
dickvdm2005@yahoo.com

Islam is present throughout Southeast Asia. However, the largest Muslim communities are found in Indonesia and Malaysia, which together are home to more than 95 per cent of the region's entire Muslim population. The smallest community is found in Laos, with only around 400 Muslims (or 0.0002 per cent of the population!), contrasting sharply with Indonesia which is the home of 190 million Muslims (in 2003, 88 per cent of the population). Needless to say, Islam, in this vast area with around 215 million Muslims, is not a single homogeneous entity. Rather, it displays variety in all possible respects: Islamic outlook, religious politics, culture and ritual, to name but a few.

*Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia* is a sourcebook containing an extensive introduction, a timeline of important events in the Muslim history of Southeast Asia, a glossary, and short country profiles preceding chapters containing sources in English translation. The timeline is very useful as an easy reference enabling the reader to cross-check events across national boundaries within the region. The country profiles are short, useful, and very readable introductions to the Islamic presence in the countries making up Southeast Asia. They also show the interconnectedness of the histories of Islam in the various countries. The glossary too is extremely useful, and deserves to be the start of a dictionary that could simplify the work of Islamic scholars and other interested readers, and might also help to bring some uniformity at last in the diverse translations of technical and local terms used in connection with Southeast Asian Islam. I could not agree more with the statement made in the introduction that 'it is important [...] that the terminology of Southeast Asian Muslims themselves is made available to readers beyond the region itself so that the context, content and "personality" of Southeast Asian Islam is recognized and better understood' (p. 3). I might add that the dissemination of this terminology to the various countries within the region is also highly desirable.

Fealy and Hooker's choice for the simplest possible way of transliterating Arabic is very welcome to those readers who do not know the language and consider struggling through diacritics a pointless waste of time. If this system were to become more widely used, it would do away with all the other confusing parallel transliteration systems and make life – not to mention typing – much easier for scholars.

One problem with providing short country profiles for such a wide vari-

ety of different countries is that those with a small Muslim community are awarded relatively too much space, whereas there is not sufficient space to devote to the larger countries – especially Indonesia, with its extremely large Muslim population. Comparatively minor events in countries with relatively few Muslims get a lot of attention, whereas major events in countries with a sizeable Muslim community do not. The result is that, at times, making meaningful comparisons between the countries becomes problematic. Too much attention, for instance, is given to unrest and killings in southern Thailand, whereas the violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Poso and the Moluccas, and the Aceh problem, are all but passed over. The Indonesian profile, written by Fealy and Hooker themselves, is clearly far too short and therefore necessarily Jakarta- and Java-centric, and may be a little difficult for non-initiates to appreciate because too much has had to be said in too little space. This may lead to confusion or misunderstanding. For instance, Fealy and Hooker write that in the latter part of Soeharto's presidency, his increasing leniency towards Islam 'allowed devout Muslims greater access to government largesse and strategic positions in the bureaucracy' (p. 46). The problem here is the word 'devout'. In a country where close to 90 per cent of the population is Muslim, ever since independence most strategic positions in the bureaucracy have always been occupied by Muslims – devout or not. I strongly doubt that before Soeharto changed his mind about Islam, the piety of the Muslims concerned was ever checked beforehand; and I cannot imagine that a candidate was ever refused as a result of being found too devout. What the people involved in the discourse about piety and power alluded to here actually mean by 'devout Muslims' is: *santri* like themselves; in other words, Muslims belonging to their own network as opposed to other networks.

The same chapter also confuses the Muslim community with Muslim mass organizations (as is so often the case). Even allowing that at present the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama have a combined following of, roughly, 60 million people, this still means that some 130 million Muslims are members of neither. In earlier periods, too, large numbers of Muslims remained outside these organizations. It was therefore not the Islamic community as a whole that was finally united under the Japanese occupation (p. 44), but only the Muslim organizations that were conveniently considered to represent that community.

While the inclusion of a subsection on 'Radical Islam' is to be applauded, it is difficult to see why a small paragraph on the Jaringan Islam Liberal, and the fatwa issued against its most prominent member and spokesman Ulil Abshar Abdallah, was not included in the Indonesia country profile. Doing so would have made the piece a little more balanced. Another weakness is that the profile gives precious little information about the Islamic school system and the predominance of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), or about Islamic universities and the plethora of other Islamic educational institutions.

In Indonesia the ties between *pesantren* and politics are extremely important, and a few lines on this institution would have been enlightening.

I was puzzled to read that in Indonesia Javanese, as the language of the largest and politically most dominant ethnic group, exerts strong influence on Islamic 'scholarship' and 'pronunciation' (p. 3). As far as I know, the Javanese language is conspicuously absent from modern Indonesian Islamic discourse. Many Javanese will use Javanese with fellow Javanese speakers when the situation requires, but in the Islamic discourse which is published and disseminated, Javanese is noticeably rare. What is meant by 'pronunciation' here is unclear to me.

The editors have understandably found it very difficult to decide what to include and what not, especially with respect to Indonesia and Malaysia. As they acknowledge themselves, one particularly difficult question was how much information to provide on 'fringe' movements such as jihadism and other radical persuasions (p. 9). The international community of scholars of Islam does require such information in order to write books and articles. However, coverage of the radical 'fringes' brings with it a danger of seriously distorting the general picture of Islam in the region. The opposite holds for the Jaringan Islam Liberal in Indonesia. This may be a tiny group of people (which is probably the reason for its omission from the country profile), but its influence reaches far beyond its formal (but undisclosed) membership.

*Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia* is an excellent introductory book for readers who speak none of the languages of the area. It enables scholars specialized in Islam as found in other parts of the world to evaluate issues in their areas of study within the context of a wider geographical scope. For journalists or diplomats, likewise, the background information which this book provides is in principle highly valuable. For their benefit, however, more details could have been provided on how to evaluate the relative importance of the texts and how to evaluate the relative import of issues over the region.

Despite the title, most information provided in the book pertains to Indonesia and Malaysia; 'voices' from the other countries in Southeast Asia are comparatively few. Information on the other countries is more or less confined to the country profiles. This balance reflects more on the actual situation of the Islamic presence in the countries discussed than is the case with the country overviews.

Lastly, the small section of photos portraying Islam in Southeast Asia is worth mentioning. It reveals, for instance, that in visual terms the Muslim presence in the various countries shows many similarities, whereas the situation as grasped from written sources often gives rise to other ideas on this matter. Further photographic materials like these still need to be presented to international audiences in order to complement the avalanche of printed information.

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Eko Endarmoko, *Tesaurus Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2006, xxi + 713 pp. ISBN 9792224475. Price: IDR 170,000 (hardback).

DON VAN MINDE  
Leiden University  
d.van.minde@let.leidenuniv.nl

Among the printed thesauri of the world's languages, Roget's *Thesaurus of English words and phrases* is unrivalled in scope and commercial success. Compiled in 1805 and first published in 1852, it has grown progressively from an initial 15,000 words in Peter Mark Roget's manuscript to more than a quarter of a million in the 1992 printed edition (tenth printing). Because his name is not trademarked, publishers have attempted to boost sales of synonym dictionaries by incorporating 'Roget' or 'thesaurus' in their titles, while 'Roget' has become a common generic word for a thesaurus. The strength of Roget's thesaurus is twofold: its comprehensiveness, and the fact that it is based on a lucid classification system of underlying concepts and meanings – a taxonomy that has remained virtually intact for over two hundred years now – accompanied by an index.

A thesaurus systematically lists kindred words – words that are semantically or cognitively related in any of three ways: they are synonyms (that express more or less the same meaning, such as *common* versus *ordinary*), hyponyms (that express a more specific meaning, such as *rose* versus *flower*), or hypernyms (that express a more generic meaning, such as *flower* versus *daisy*). Additionally a thesaurus may give antonyms (that express an opposite meaning, such as *common* versus *rare*), meronyms (that express part of a larger whole, such as *roof peak* versus *roof*), and holonyms (that express the whole of which the given word is a part, such as *house* versus *roof*). A thesaurus does not describe word meanings; its users are assumed to know both the words' denotations and their connotations. For professional writers and linguists, therefore, a foreign-language thesaurus is usually a companion to a dictionary of that particular language.

Synonym dictionaries or wordlists, on the other hand, are usually more modest in scope. Contrary to thesauri, synonym dictionaries are available in hundreds of languages, and they do not necessarily involve much lexicographic research. As crossword puzzlers around the globe know, their size and quality vary greatly.

For more than three decades Harimurti Kridalaksana's dictionary has been the main guide for Indonesian synonyms. Judging from the eight reprints since it was first published in 1974, it has been a considerable success.

Physically, Eko Endarmoko's 713-page thesaurus definitely outshines Harimurti's 210-page dictionary. The voluminous hardcover edition is more-

over neatly printed and graphically well designed. To be sure, we would not expect any reliable thesaurus of modern Indonesian to be less than capacious, since we are dealing with a fully-fledged modern language that has witnessed a remarkable growth and renewal of its vocabulary since the early twentieth century. Major new lexical input has come by borrowing from regional languages including Javanese, Sundanese, and Minangkabau, the prestigious Malay dialect of Jakarta, and foreign languages including Dutch, English, and Arabic, while conscious language engineering has also resorted to word formation by means of neo-Sanskritisms, acronyms and so-called initialisms.

The large number of pages, however, is partly accounted for by the fact that Endarmoko consciously (p. xiv) applies a principle of full circularity. Such a principle is something that must be avoided at all costs in ordinary dictionaries (where explanations such as *awak* = *badan*, *tubuh* and *badan* = *awak*, *tubuh* are utterly unhelpful to the user), whereas in synonym dictionaries a method of cross-referencing is imperative. Under the main entry *badan*, for instance, Endarmoko lists seven nominal synonyms in the sense '(entire) body' (of which *jasmani* is, I think, an adjective 'bodily; physical'), plus two synonyms for 'body' in the restricted sense of 'torso', two synonyms for 'body' functioning as pronoun 'self', three synonyms for (high-order?) institutional 'bodies', and five synonyms for other (lower-order?) institutional 'bodies'. Under each of the seven synonyms, all other synonyms are fully repeated. (One way to avoid this expensive repetition would be to use an index.)

Another positive aspect compared to Harimurti's dictionary is that Endarmoko gives additional linguistic and socio-linguistic information. Short labels (pp. xx–xxi) indicate categorical status (noun, verb, adjective), registers and styles (archaic, colloquial, honorary style, figurative/metaphorical senses, classical style), source language for borrowings, particular religious groups (Buddha, Islam, Katolik, Kristen), scientific disciplines and technology, and professions or segments of society (sailing/shipping, the military). It would have been helpful if the author had given more explanation for some of these labels. It is well known, for instance, that in Indonesian members of the class he calls 'adjective' have more affinity with intransitive verbs. A brief explanation of this point would have been instructive, for instance for foreign language teachers in Indonesia. Also, it is not immediately clear what the difference is between the categories *klasik* 'classical', *kiasan* 'figurative/metaphorical' (both from the higher category *ragam bahasa* 'language style'), and *kesusastraan* 'literary' (from the category *bidang kehidupan dan bidang ilmu* 'spheres of life and science'). Not included in the list of category labels, however, is the abbreviation *kas*, which presumably stands for *kasar* 'coarse, vulgar' (see the twelve synonyms for *bersebadan* 'to copulate' under the main entry *badan*, where the Jakartan/Javanese loan *ngéwé* is missing).

These examples show that Endarmoko has approached his material with a modern, liberal view on how to define Indonesian. It is clear that he does not



hold a prescriptive position, but instead offers a range of possibilities – many well beyond the limits of what old-fashioned language authorities would allow – that speakers may use according to communicative need and in different settings. This is in agreement with the dominant contemporary view of what a language actually is: not a stable monolithic construct, but rather an aggregate of styles, genres, and dialects in an ever-changing state, changing not only as the result of inner forces, but also under the influence of contact with other dialects and languages. The recently published and excellent Indonesian-English dictionary by Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings was compiled with a similar point of view, but unfortunately Endarmoko did not have the opportunity to consult their work. Future comparison with this dictionary and others will probably result in important corrections and additions.

Finally, it may be that publications of this kind will not be published any more in the future. Whether because of laziness or time pressure, I too often resort to a right mouse click for an easy solution. As word processors conquer the world, spell checkers and synonym lists will become available for most national languages. For more complicated questions, authoritative dictionaries and extensive thesauri are directly accessible through internet. Princeton University's excellent and free-of-charge WordNet is just one example of an extensive English lexical database. But then, let us not forget that the word processor's easy solutions are parasitic products, appropriated from the works of dedicated dictionary makers such as Endarmoko.

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Charles J.-H. Macdonald, *Uncultural behavior; An anthropological investigation of suicide in the southern Philippines*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, xiii + 307 pp. ISBN 9780824831035, price USD 29.00 (paperback); 9780824830601, USD 62.00 (hardback).

RAUL PERTIERRA  
University of the Philippines  
rpertier@mozcom.com



This is an impressive study of a small group of swidden cultivators on the island of Palawan in the southern Philippines. While its conclusion is not entirely convincing, the ethnographic detail provided, as well as the clarity of argumentation, is exemplary. This is a piece of scholarship long in the making. Charles Macdonald and Nicole Revel have been working in the area for several decades. Their familiarity with its peoples and culture are well documented.

The book begins with a detailed description of the Kulbi-Kenipaqaan, characterizing them as a gentle, peaceful group of intercommunal households enjoying amicable relationships with their neighbours. It is therefore surprising that despite these favourable conditions, the Kulbi exhibit extremely high rates of suicide. Macdonald has examined the ethnographic record, and it seems only the Jivaro have a higher rate of suicide. The data refer to small communities and not to modern nation-states. The literature on suicide generally compares large populations rather than local communities.

Contrary to the famous Durkheimian thesis that changes in social structure are responsible for suicide, Macdonald claims that culture is not to blame for the high suicide rates among the Kulbi. In fact their culture, like most others, condemns suicide and does not valorize self-sacrifice. Their reasons for committing suicide often appear trivial to the outside observer: a slight insult, for instance, or a minor altercation. Their ways of killing themselves follow certain patterns, of which hanging is the most common. All of these factors indicate that culture, or at least convention, does indeed enter into the act. Even in death, the Kulbi tend to avoid violence and drama: quiet suffocation under the house is preferred to self-immolation or jumping from treetops. But Macdonald's point is that nothing explicit in the culture seems to predispose to self-destruction. The aetiology of the act, then, must be sought elsewhere. The Kulbi are a small group of interrelated peoples with high rates of intermarriage. In the past their population has been depleted, further boosting the rate of intermarriage. These factors have predisposed the Kulbi to forms of depression that may result in suicide. This is a plausible theory and Macdonald presents material that supports it, having previously refuted more conventional anthropological or sociological interpretations.

The old nature-culture debate is once more attracting attention following recent advances in neurobiology and genetics. Nature is no longer seen simply as brute facticity, but rather as an active agent in shaping behaviour. Culture, on the other hand, can increasingly also shape nature through genetic manipulation. Sociologists have argued that we live in a purely cultural world, having vanquished the constraints of the natural world. Some even go as far as claiming that we live in a postcorporeal world limited only by computer gigabytes.

This book is a good reminder that we need more detailed studies of the close interconnections between cultures and their natural habitats. The old nature/culture dichotomy can no longer adequately explain the complex exchanges

linking these two categories. Instead we need long-term ethnographic investigations to show how the relationship may alter with time, favouring one aspect of the binary pair over the other, but always indicating its porous boundaries. Macdonald's contribution to this debate is significant not only for scholars of Southeast Asia, but also for anthropologists dissatisfied with earlier models.

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Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge (eds), *The Third Indochina War; Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79*. London: Routledge, 2006, iii + 242 pp. [Cold War History Series, 11.] ISBN 0415390583. Price: GBP 70.00 (hardback).

VATTHANA PHOLSENA  
CNRS, Université Lyon 2  
vpholsena@gmail.com

Public disclosure of the Cambodian genocide and the wars between Vietnam, China and Cambodia in the late 1970s stunned the world and left socialist movements, especially those in the Third World, bewildered. In the space of a few months, faith in Asian communism and its inspirational model for the anti-imperialist struggle was crushed and anti-communist inflammatory postures were revived in the heated climate of the Cold War. This volume is presented by its editors, Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, two specialists on the Cold War in Asia, as an attempt to study the concrete causes of the Vietnamese-Cambodian and Sino-Vietnamese conflicts (as opposed to a perennial-culturalist approach). The opening of access to new materials (archives and memoirs) in Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union in recent times has certainly facilitated such an initiative.

The volume judiciously adopts a broad analytical framework in terms of both time (covering four decades from the 1950s to the late 1980s) and space (intersecting national, regional and international levels). It contains nine chapters and opens with a stimulating introduction by Odd Arne Westad. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the worsening of Sino-Vietnamese relations from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Chapter 3 focuses on post-war American strategy towards Vietnam. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s. The last four chapters explore the Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict, its origins, development and aftermath.

Lieng-Hang Nguyen (Chapter 1) and Chen Jian (Chapter 2) concur in dating the inception of the Sino-Vietnamese split to 1968, when Hanoi alone took the decision to launch the Tet Offensive and thereafter to open negotiations with the United States. It was primarily changes in Beijing's Vietnam

War policy that eventually broke down the dynamics of Sino-Vietnamese collaboration, however. The Sino-Soviet dispute and, especially, the Sino-American rapprochement significantly altered Beijing's stance towards North Vietnam. As shown by Chen Jian, changing domestic conditions in Mao's China (by late 1968, Mao's policy of 'continuous revolution' was out of date) also explained Beijing's 'reduced enthusiasm' for the Vietnam War (p. 48). If Lieng-Hang Nguyen is unequivocal in faulting Beijing for the breakdown of the Sino-Vietnamese relationship (as the PRC pursued its own national and geopolitical interests), Chen Jian points out the mutual distrust and reciprocal lack of understanding that underlay the relationship between China and Vietnam during the 1960s.

It is likewise distrust, suspicion and misunderstanding that mostly characterize the United States' policy towards Vietnam between 1975 and 1979 (Chapter 3), as well as Vietnam's own post-war foreign policy, especially towards ASEAN (Chapters 4 and 5). The dramatic consequences of this state of affairs were 'missed opportunities' to embark much earlier on the normalization of the relationships between Vietnam on the one hand, and the United States and ASEAN on the other. Nguyen Vu Tung argues that because of Hanoi's 'ideological blinkers' and 'intellectual limitations', and despite ASEAN's calls for cooperation, newly reunified communist Vietnam failed to free itself from a Manichean view of international relations (p. 120).

Christopher Goscha (Chapter 7) emphasizes the importance of contemporary ideology, particularly in understanding the 'special relationship' between the DRV and the PRC and the reason for the Vietnamese communists' (terribly mistaken) views on the Khmer communist group that emerged in Cambodia after 1954. Internationalism was the guiding ideology for Asian anti-colonial and revolutionary movements throughout most of the twentieth century; China and Vietnam collaborated under its terms for fifty years from the early 1920s to the early 1970s. The DRV viewed its relationships with the Lao and Khmer communists through the same internationalist looking glass – very productively in the former case, but with appalling consequences in the latter. As Goscha observes: the 'radical nationalist communism' developed by the Khmer Rouge 'was incompatible mentally with the internationalist model being imagined in Vietnamese heads' (p. 169). In addition to being driven largely by Khmer racist chauvinism, the Khmer Rouge revolution, 'neither purely indigenous nor fully imported' as Ben Kiernan puts it, was a 'syncretism' of extensively borrowed, yet partially followed and locally reinterpreted, foreign revolutionary doctrines (p. 201). Ultimately, both foreign influences and indigenous components of Khmer Rouge ideology and practice propelled the leaders of DK towards their genocidal project.

Sophie Quinn-Judge in the last chapter insists that without DK's bloody attacks inside Vietnamese territory, the Third Indochina War would not have

happened. In this regard, she shares the view of the rest of the contributors: in the late 1970s, tensions between Vietnam and China alone would not have been sufficient to provoke a war between the two former allies. In line with the book's agenda, Quinn-Judge firmly resists the historico-cultural interpretation of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (that is, as the realization of age-old Vietnamese expansionist ambitions) and instead stresses the 'chain of events' set off by the Sino-US rapprochement. In other words, perceptions and behaviours in international relations are not immutable; one needs to take into account adaptations and modifications based on changing realities. This is reflected in her analysis of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia between 1979 and 1989. Though she admits that 'the question of long-term Vietnamese intentions in Cambodia is one that is difficult to answer definitively' (p. 217), the rationale for Vietnam's 'Cambodian decade' was, in her view, fuelled by the objective to 'irreversibly' transform Cambodia into a 'friend' and, at the same time, reinforced by the hostile diplomacy of the United States, China and ASEAN. As Soviet aid dwindled in the mid-1980s and the Chinese threat faded away, Vietnam's occupation lost its *raison d'être*, and the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia soon followed.

The book is most solid in its studies of Chinese and Vietnamese perceptions and positioning. While it does not bring anything new to the analysis of the immediate causes of the Third Indochina War (other studies have already demonstrated the modern character of the conflict), it does offer a more detailed and nuanced study of China's and Vietnam's internal politics and external policies. Its persuasive and insightful chapters, dissecting the evolution, changes, and even contradictions in China's and Vietnam's policies towards each other, their neighbours (particularly Cambodia and Thailand), ASEAN and the big powers over six decades (from the 1920s to the late 1980s), should prevent any upcoming studies on the Third Indochina War from systematically branding 'history' and 'tradition' as the perennial forces underlying the conflicts (except perhaps with regard to the Khmer Rouge's policy towards Vietnam in 1977-1978). The volume would have benefited from a chapter discussing the Soviet Union's side of the story; nonetheless, bar the incongruous inclusion of Chapter 6 (an otherwise informative analysis of the failure of post-1975 socialist agricultural reforms in the southern half of Vietnam) and the somewhat redundant argumentation in Chapter 4, the book represents a strong contribution to the study of the Third Indochina War and is a welcome addition to the body of literature on Cold War international history.

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B. Bouman, *Ieder voor zich en de Republiek voor ons allen; De logistiek achter de Indonesische Revolutie 1945-1950*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2006, 469 pp. ISBN 9085063566. Price: EUR 29.50 (paperback).

HARRY A. POEZE

Royal Netherlands Institute of  
Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden  
poeze@kitlv.nl

Brigade-generaal buiten dienst Bouman, die als militair diende in de dekolonisatieoorlog tussen Nederland en Indonesië presenteerde zijn boek in januari ook in Djakarta, waar een groot gezelschap van Indonesische veteranen, die ooit tegenover hem stonden, de boekpresentatie in het sjeke hotel Mandarin kwam opluisteren. De tegenstanders van weleer zijn nu vrienden – en dat verschaft aan de bijeenkomst een heel bijzondere sfeer.

Er was lof voor Boumans werk, maar ook kritiek. Algemeen was die op de titel van het boek, die inderdaad gemakkelijk aanleiding geeft tot misverstand. De inzet van de militairen voor hun idealen zou hiermee kunnen worden miskend en is daarom ongelukkig gekozen, was de algemene opvatting. Curieus is dat Bouman zijn titel ontleent aan een brief van een Indonesische veteraan die over de logistiek aan zijn zijde zegt: 'Ieder voor zich en zijn *barisan* (eenheid), God en de Republiek Indonesia voor ons allen'. Hij wilde daarmee zeggen dat in logistiek opzicht iedere eenheid van de toch al gefragmenteerde Indonesische strijdkrachten voor het grootste deel voor zichzelf moest zorgen.

Bezwaren waren er ook tegen Boumans gematigde twijfel aan de volkssteun voor het leger, waarbij hij opmerkingen van Nasution daarover van januari 1949 aanhaalt die uithaalt tegen passiviteit en vijandelijkheid van het volk. Zo'n aanhaling zelfs al gaat in tegen de mythische eensgezindheid van volk en leger in de guerrilla tegen Nederland, die de Indonesische geschiedschrijving domineert. Bouman werkt dit overigens verder nauwelijks uit en zegt op diverse plaatsen dat het succes van de Indonesische strijdkrachten niet kan worden losgezien van de algemene volkssteun die grotendeels vrijwillig uitging naar het leger. Dat is wellicht een te sterke formulering en in de Nederlandse intelligence van toen en in de militaire-herinneringsliteratuur zijn, na aftrek van propaganda en overdrijving, genoegzaam gegevens daarover te vinden.

Bouman beschrijft de logistiek, dat in zijn betekenis is gekoppeld aan militaire aangelegenheden. Maar Bouman verwijdt zijn studie tot de logistiek van de Indonesische Revolutie, als onlosmakelijk verbonden met de militaire component. Dit laatste toch perkt hij weer in door niet de gehele financiering van de Republiek en zijn 'materiële uitrusting' te behandelen, maar zich te beperken tot vooral een aantal buitenlandse aspecten daarvan: smokkel per boot en vliegtuig van landbouwproducten, opium en goud, te ruilen

tegen wapens, munitie en zendapparatuur; de betrokkenheid daarvan van Singapore, Malakka, Thailand, Birma, India en Australië; de vestiging en financiering van republikeinse kantoren buiten Indonesië; en de inschakeling van buitenlandse agenten, zakenlieden, piloten en avonturiers. De burgerlijke overheid was daarbij betrokken, maar ook allerlei legereenheden dreven hun eigen zaakjes, die vooral op Sumatra ook profijtelijk waren.

Bouman heeft zijn onderzoek vooral gebaseerd op Nederlandse archieven, waarin ook veel republikeinse archivalia zijn beland, en interviews met Indonesische veteranen, met een oververtegenwoordiging van de West-Javaanse Siliwangidivisie. De intelligence verzameld in Nederlandse archieven wordt uitvoerig gebruikt. De omvang daarvan is enorm, maar de betrouwbaarheid is dubieus en wordt gekleurd door onkunde en ideologische en politieke correctheid. Bouman lijkt wel eens te licht de koers te volgen van de informanten die de Nederlandse intelligence bewust en onbewust om de tuin leidden. Indonesischtalige bronnen zijn te weinig gebruikt. De militaire-herinneringsliteratuur aan Indonesische zijde is nog omvangrijker dan de Nederlandse en daarin liggen de gegevens verborgen die Boumans boek nog meer structuur hadden kunnen verschaffen.

Bouman volgt een chronologische opzet, waarin ruimschoots ruimte is voor het kader van algemeen-politieke en militaire ontwikkelingen. De logistiek behandelt hij in algemene zin, maar vooral in aparte hoofdstukjes over voedsel, wapens, munitie, kleding, medische zorg, transport- en communicatiemiddelen. Na de overname van de voorraden van het Japanse leger zijn het de buitenlandse activiteiten, met een grote rol voor Chinese tussenpersonen, die de meeste aandacht krijgen. De rol die Amir Sjarifoeddin als minister van defensie en lid van de Partai Sosialis, met een ministerie vol partijgenoten, in de logistieke begunstiging van politiek verwante eenheden als vooral Pesindo wordt slechts beknopt genoemd. Hoe ging dat in zijn werk? De gevolgen daarvan waren niet van de minste invloed op het verloop van de Revolutie.

En in dat buitenland waren het de Britten in Singapore die hun geallieerde bondgenoot in de steek lieten en oogluikend en zelfs nog actiever Indonesische smokkel en handel toelieten. Wat zat daar achter en tot hoe hoog ging dat oogluiken? Is Bouman het eens met de theorieën van Greg Poulgrain (*The genesis of konfrontasi*, 1998) hierover?

Bekende en onbekende verhalen over de wijze waarop de Republiek onder de Nederlandse blokkade probeerde uit te komen worden verteld: de opiumsmokkel, die werd opgerold en door Nederland handenwrijvend onthuld, het contract met de Amerikaanse zakenman Matthew Fox tot groot-scheepse handel, maar ook aanwijzingen over corruptie en misdadigheid onder Nederlandse troepen die handeldreven met de tegenstander (Bouman is hierover terughoudend). En nog veel meer namen, data en hoeveelheden worden bijna duizelingwekkend opgetekend.



Bouman heeft een zeer ingewikkeld onderwerp – of liever een aantal zeer ingewikkelde onderwerpen – aangepakt en zich daarmee kwetsbaar gemaakt voor kritiek zoals hierboven opgeschreven. Die laat echter de waarde van dit boek onverlet als een overzicht van allerlei ‘centrale randverschijnselen’ in de Indonesische Revolutie, dat vaak zal worden op- en nageslagen.

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Michel Gilquin, *The Muslims of Thailand*. Bangkok: IRASEC-Silkworm Books, 2005, xx + 164 pp. ISBN 9749575857. Price: EUR 16.00 (paperback).

NATHAN PORATH  
International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden  
nathanporath@yahoo.co.uk

This short, popular, unscholarly, lightweight and overgeneralized book focuses on, as the title tells us, the Muslims of Thailand. The main questions the book seems to be addressing are those of the origins of the Thai Muslims, the problems they face as Muslims in a Buddhist kingdom, and the manner in which this kingdom tries to accommodate its Muslim minority. A further problem is how Thai Islam tries to relate to modernity, particularly a modernity brought to Muslims through the Buddhist kingdom. It opens with an imaginary touristic impression of Thai Muslims, reminding the reader that although Thailand is a Buddhist kingdom it has a small minority Muslim population, scattered throughout the country, which a traveller can encounter while touring.

Although the book claims to be about Thai Muslims in general, Gilquin does point out that this group is ethnically varied. While he briefly mentions other Muslim communities such as the Cham and the Muslims of Chiang Mai, a large part of the book focuses on the Malay-speaking Muslims of the deep south who live in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Satun, Narathiwat and Songkla. He also touches upon the office of the *chularajamontri*, the official spiritual leader of the Thai Muslim community. Mention is further made of the word *khaek*, a term which he says is not pejorative (p. 24) and which he equates with the term *farang*, which Thais use to refer to Westerners. But in fact, although originally *kheak* had no pejorative meaning, its usage became pejorative in the course of the twentieth century, especially in relation to the Muslims of southern Thailand. Literally meaning ‘guests’, it originally referred to all foreigners originating from Muslim lands and from India. Later, applied to the Muslim minority within Thailand, it implied that they were still foreigners in their own country. On the popular level, moreover, many Thais came to use the term with a pejorative tone in their voice, reflecting a view of the religious difference in terms of backwardness.



The author tries to capture the history of Islam in Thailand, and of the southern Thai Muslim Malays, in a nutshell. He tells us how the Malay kingdom of Patani rose to glory before being taken over by Siam. He pinpoints a date – 1457 – for the conversion of the kingdom to Islam, but does not provide any source references to support this. With regard to Islamization he makes the oddly phrased statement that ‘Islam *though considered to be inflexible*, knew how to adapt to local conditions’ (p. 12, my italics). Here and elsewhere in the book, he seems at times to be stereotyping Islam as intrinsically rigid and uncompromising.

Islam entered Siam from the north, via Yunnan. Although most of the people of Yunnan, as Gilquin stresses, were not Muslim, many of the traders there were. Later, in the nineteenth century, many Chinese Muslims sought refuge in Burma and Siam from repression in Yunnan. Those who fled to Siam stayed in the north of the country. Further influxes of Muslims followed in the twentieth century, with migrants fleeing Mao Zedong’s government. Another element of Thai Islam came from Persia at an earlier date through wealthy Persian merchants trading with Ayutthaya. A few of these merchants even became high court dignitaries, who influenced the country’s art and architecture. One seventeenth-century Siamese king, Narai, nearly converted to Islam. The Persian Muslims later disappeared as a distinct group by marrying into the Thai Buddhist population – Gilquin describes this as ‘inter-breeding’ (probably a translator’s error!). Other Muslims came from Champa in the east. Gilquin does not seem to mention those Thai Muslims, once known as Sam Sam, who are indigenous to the south but who are nevertheless Thai speakers.

As to the problems of being a Muslim in Thailand, Gilquin stresses issues such as maintaining identity markers through dress and other outward symbols, while at the same time having to accept some Thai symbols that had their source in Buddhism, to negotiate the issue of religious and secular education, and also to deal with the drug problem among Muslim youth.

Part II of the book, consisting of three short chapters, is mainly concerned with the Malay-speaking Muslims in the deep south. The author chooses always to refer to the Malay-speaking Thai Muslims as *javi* rather than as Malays, as *ore nayu* (Patani Malays), or simply as Thai Muslims. *Javi*, however, has specific Malayo-Muslim connotations which make it inappropriate to some of the contexts in which Gilquin uses it. For example, in a section on the customs of the ‘Javi-speaking people’ he describes the *pondok* (traditional religious school) side by side with the *bomoh* (spirit medium/healer). True, the two are part and parcel of the religio-cultural practices of the area, but they exist in such different cultural spheres that their juxtaposition in the text reads rather awkwardly. The practice of the *bomoh* is an aspect of archaic Malay culture and works within a different cultural frame of reference from that of the *pondok*, which in southern Thailand is one of the symbols of the *javi* identity, being an institution of Islamic learning.

The author further overgeneralizes in his comment that non-Muslim local traders are seen as *kuffar al harb*. In reality, most people would not readily use such an aggressive term. At the same time, he does stress that relations with the non-Muslim Chinese are generally easier than those with the Thai Buddhists. In his discussion of the old kingdom of Patani, he follows modern historical convention in portraying a situation of general antagonism between the Patani ruling elite and Siam. While conceding that the relationship went through cooperative as well as hostile phases, he does not explore the role of internal factional competition in determining fluctuations in the political closeness of Patani and Siam. The book does provide some brief but interesting comments about some of the twentieth-century separatist movements in the area.

The most interesting chapters in the book are found in Section III, entitled 'Islam and the Thai nation'. In these chapters Gilquin gives us some up-to-date descriptions of events in the increasingly democratic Thailand of the 1980s and 1990s. He tells us that some of the basic principles of Islam are 'opposed to a liberal economic logic and the process of individualization'. However, it should be stressed that the same issues are also problematic for many Thai Buddhists. One section, rhetorically entitled 'Democracy or separatism?', deals with the recent upsurge of violence in the southern provinces. The inclusion of this section in this part of the book, however, makes it seem that the political problem in the south is a problem of Thai Muslims in general.

The book is replete with rhetorical questions, which after a while become frustrating given that the answers provided are so flimsy. The maps in the book are clear and useful, as are the tables. In *The Muslims of Thailand*, Gilquin consistently tries to evoke the context of social relations between Thai Muslims and other Thais. This he does rather well. However, there is a certain dearth here of solid, detailed information. The book is what it is, a popular introduction to the subject of the Thai Muslims. It is the type of book to be read when touring Thailand and in need of something to do to kill time.

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Tom Boellstorff, *The gay archipelago; Sexuality and nation in Indonesia*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005, 320 pp. ISBN 9780691123349, price USD 27.95 (paperback); 9780691123332, USD 65.00 (hardback).

RAQUEL REYES  
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London  
rr14@soas.ac.uk

Much has been written about contemporary homosexual communities in Western cities – the gay 'scene' in New York, London and Amsterdam for example

– but cross-cultural inquiries on gay and lesbian communities outside the West were, until recently, rather rare. Over the last decade or so, this has changed significantly. There is now an impressive range of studies, many extremely sophisticated and complex, which examine the connections between the effects of globalization and the emergence and proliferation of new sexual cultures and multiple eroticized identities in a number of major Asian cities from Bangkok and Manila to Beijing and Taipei.<sup>1</sup> Tom Boellstorff's nuanced ethnography of gay and lesbian communities in late twentieth-century Indonesia is a thoughtful and illuminating contribution to this new scholarship on globalization and the creation of new genders and sexualities in contemporary Asia.

Recent decades have seen Asian cities transform dramatically. Cultural anthropologists and sociologists have asked how and what changes in the economies, political systems and cultures of non-Western societies influenced or incited the rise of new gay and lesbian identities, created new homosexual communities and new 'scenes' or spaces for the expression of those identities. Investigating what has been termed 'global queering' in Asia, authors have noted patterns and parallels in cross-cultural erotic interaction and practices, and in the influence of Western ideas on the imagining and articulation of sexual identities as they have emerged with industrialization, greater affluence, migration, mass tourism, and the widespread use of new communication technologies. Certain key concepts, such as 'hybridity' and 'syncretism', have been found useful in understanding locally varied forms of homosexual lifestyles and the diverse expressions of gender and sexual difference. Crucially too, there is greater appreciation for local social and cultural contexts, especially with regard to dominant and prevailing heterosexual norms and conventions (or 'regimes of heteronormativity', as they have been called), in relation to which Asian gays and lesbians define their sexual identities, or against the strictures of which they resist.

Boellstorff's focus is on male and female homosexuals, more precisely *gay* men and *lesbi* women, terms which he consistently italicizes to underscore how the ostensibly Western concepts of homosexuality are transformed when they are 'taken up and lived' in the Indonesian context. The borrowing of English terms such as 'gay' and 'lesbian', or the appropriation of Western gay styles so prevalent amongst urban homosexual communities throughout Asia, are, as the author shows, reflective of local expressions of sexuality that present a separation or break from traditional forms of sexual difference, or even resistance to prescribed sexual norms. The descriptive and linguistic distinctions are complex, involving multiple categories: male-to-female transvestites known as *warias*, female-to-male transgenders or *tombois*, and a host of other 'traditional' homosexualities and transgenderisms'. Indeed, the variations sometimes appear kaleidoscopic. *Lesbi* women, for instance, encompass 'not

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Gerard Sullivan and Peter Jackson (eds), *Gay and lesbian Asia; Culture, identity, community*, New York: Harrington Park Press, 2001.

only' feminine women (*cewek*), but also women who believe they have men's souls: masculine women who are known by a myriad of names throughout Indonesia (*cowok* in Sumatra, *butchie* and *sentul* in parts of Java).

Boellstorff wants to relate globalizing processes to the ways in which *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians understand and view their sexual identities not only from local perspectives, but also in national terms that relate to official, government representations of Indonesia as an 'archipelago of unity in diversity'. Employing a central theoretical metaphor he calls 'dubbing culture', a term taken from the practice of dubbing Western television shows into Indonesian, the author strives to convey the 'productive tension' arising from sexual subject positions formed from a variety of elements: rhetorical discourses of national belonging, ideas about family life considered to be authentically Indonesian, the practice of partially borrowing from Western linguistic and cultural sources, and continuous re-invention. Indonesian gay and lesbian sexualities are 'self-evidently novel' and, as in dubbed Western shows, there can never be a faithful translation. Boellstorff's theoretical explanations make difficult reading and left me at times confused. For example, his statements about 'subjectivities' and 'subject positions', and how one cannot live without the other, were at times cryptic. What is clear, however, is the author's particular ethnographic approach to Indonesia and the complexities of living a *gay* or *lesbi* life. The country, in all its diversity, is here seen as a single 'unit of analysis' and we are invited to follow the author's 'queer' reading of the category 'Indonesian', which for gays and lesbians is fragmented, lived intermittently, in stolen moments of intimacy, or as he evocatively writes, lived 'in vignettes'. Surprisingly, it is an approach that studiously avoids discussing sex. For Boellstorff, sex and sexual practices merit little space within an analysis that emphasizes subject positions. Sex practices, in fact, occupy barely three pages of this 281-page book.

Boellstorff is an ambitious and careful researcher. The book, as he writes, is the product of almost two years of activism and fieldwork spread over a period of twelve years. His preferred methods are participant observation and interview. What is more, he is acutely conscious of the religious and ethnic diversity of one of the most populous countries on earth. While he has concentrated his research principally in Surabaya, Makassar, and Bali, he has also spent time in rural areas. He has spoken to *gay* and *lesbi* Hindus, Muslims and Christians in shopping malls, parks, discos and in private apartments. The stories he tells are often moving and say something about his convictions and motivations. Boellstorff respects the differences he finds, yet at times he is concerned to see sameness and familiarity, even a wish to find global solidarity where perhaps none might exist. Scattered throughout the book are comparisons with Western gay and lesbian views, concerning issues such as sexual desires, that are noted in order to stress similarities.

Gender and sexual difference are marginalized by every Asian society, though the extent and forms of marginalization differ with each society. In his

introduction, Boellstorff candidly reveals much about himself and his politics. The reader learns, for instance, that before becoming a cultural anthropologist, the author originally trained as a linguist; he is also a dedicated activist and a gay, white male. This book, in so many ways, is reflective of all of this. The author is careful in his use of Indonesian terms that describe, categorize or give a name to the diversity of genders and sexualities. He also writes with empathy. He hopes to leave his Indonesian- and English-speaking readership with an 'appreciation for the lives of gay and lesbian Indonesians'; he hopes to have raised new questions that 'could point to new visions of social justice'; he hopes that he has not merely provided an intimate and provocative account of Indonesian sexual culture, but opened a serious enquiry into 'how human social relations come to be, are sustained, and change over time'. Finally, he hopes to convey the camaraderie and creativity, as well as the despair and the pain, of homosexual Indonesians. This Boellstorff does well.

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Kathleen M. Adams, *Art as politics; Re-crafting identities, tourism, and power in Tana Toraja, Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006, xi + 286 pp. ISBN 9780824830724, price USD 25.00 (paperback); 9780824829995, USD 57.00 (hardback).

DIK ROTH  
Wageningen University  
dik.roth@wur.nl

Tana Toraja District in South Sulawesi Province is among the areas in Indonesia most widely known among tourists. Millions of foreign and domestic tourists have visited it since 1970. Its key attractions are material objects like ancestral houses (*tongkonan*), and 'traditional' cultural expressions like death ceremonies, at which large numbers of buffalo are slaughtered. All set in a landscape of steep cliffs, verdant rice terraces and bamboo groves. Early in the New Order period, tourism became the hope of this resource-poor and densely populated area. The number of visitors continued to grow every year until 1995. From 1996 – two years before the demise of the Soeharto regime and the tensions and conflicts associated with his fall – there was a sharp drop. Later conflicts in nearby Poso have only worsened the situation. According to Office of Tourism statistics as quoted in the book reviewed here (p. 16), the number of tourists visiting Tana Toraja is now back at the level of the late 1970s.

Kathleen Adams has done extensive research on tourism in Tana Toraja since 1984. The book is based on several long periods of anthropological research on the relationships between art and other cultural expressions, identity, and tourism. If only because it deals with an external force of global

proportions that has decisively influenced the social, political and cultural life of the Toraja highlands in recent decades, Adams's work is a crucial addition to scholarship on Tana Toraja and the wider region. It is, moreover, very informative and written in an accessible style.

Adams's work is extremely valuable for other reasons as well. First, Adams has not run into a trap in which so many tourists get caught: that of regarding Tana Toraja as a 'traditional culture' frozen in an unchanging (pre-)historical state, and its inhabitants as 'authentic' and 'close to nature'. Instead, conceptualizing art as an 'affecting presence' (p. 11) with a strong emotive force, Adams focuses on the various ways in which art objects and other forms of cultural expression become important in shaping, strengthening, or changing identities. Second, rather than analysing the Toraja as passive and powerless onlookers, Adams shows that they actively mobilize the global interest in Toraja culture to strengthen their own identity, prestige and power.

Adams analyses several cultural domains to illustrate this constitutive role of art and other cultural expressions in internal and external social relationships. Attention is given to the ancestral house (*tongkonan*), mortuary effigies (*tau-tau*), ceremonials, cultural displays and museums, the national and transnational use of Toraja icons, and the emergence of new conceptions of community from the uncertainties, tensions and conflicts of the post-Soeharto era. In the concluding chapter, Adams illustrates the role of Toraja people as agents and strategists (rather than victims) of globalization by describing their efforts to get the village of Ke'te' Kesu' placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

Identity and identity politics are a key theme throughout the book. With the societal changes of the past decades, erecting a *tongkonan*, formerly a privilege of the Toraja social elite, came within reach of lower-status Toraja with money to spend. Tourist sector demands for easily digestible displays of elements of Toraja culture, dissociated from their cultural meaning and context, met with protests from the elite against this violation of Toraja tradition. At the same time, competition for formal recognition of *tongkonan* as 'tourist objects' – a designation regarded as a proof of high status and prestige – fuelled elite rivalry. The carvings on *tongkonan*, meanwhile, serve as comments on social and political life: statements about colonial oppression, status, ethnic identity, religion, or political party affiliation. The presence of mortuary effigies (*tau-tau*) at death ceremonies leads to conflicts with the (Protestant) Toraja church, which is bent on restricting such non-Christian practices. The Indonesian government, on the other hand, encourages continuation of such cultural expressions, which help to confirm the unique and 'traditional' image of Tana Toraja. For the Toraja, the *tau-tau* represent family pride and status; for tourists, evidence of unchanging tradition; and for thieves and art dealers, opportunities for making money on the global art market.



Identity politics are particularly prominent in the sensitive relationship between the Toraja in the highlands, and the Bugis and Makasarese in the lowlands of South Sulawesi. The presence of Toraja culture in the provincial capital, Makassar – in the shape of decorative carvings, architecture, and dance performances – is not only a source of Toraja pride. Some Toraja interpret it as a lowland attempt to outcompete their region on the tourist market by appropriating Toraja culture and making tourists consume it (and spend their money) outside Tana Toraja. The Makasarese, in their turn, are sometimes critical of this increased presence of Toraja culture in the lowlands. Both groups, in other words, are engaged in ‘an architectural battle being waged for symbolic preeminence’ (p. 182). After the political changes of the late 1990s there was a real danger that ‘silent symbolic ethnic battles’ (p. 209) in Tana Toraja and its surroundings would turn into violent confrontations fuelled by ethno-religious sentiments. This same period, however, also saw the creation of stronger bonds between Toraja and ethnic Chinese in the highlands via the bridge of a common (Christian) religion.

There is nothing that better illustrates the ambivalence of Toraja culture and identity, Adams rightly concludes, than the recognition of Tana Toraja by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. While UNESCO intends this to help preserve a ‘traditional’ lifestyle, for the Toraja it is primarily an opportunity to make more money from tourism, boost their own prestige, and win another battle with the lowlanders.

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Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Leo Suryadinata, *Emerging democracy in Indonesia*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2005, xviii + 166 pp. ISBN 9812303227, price USD 19.90 (paperback); 9812303235, USD 32.90 (hardback).

HENK SCHULTE NORDHOLT  
 Royal Netherlands Institute of  
 Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Leiden  
 schultenordholt@kitlv.nl

Since 1998, Indonesia has experienced a rapid transition from a centralized, authoritarian regime towards a decentralized, democratic system. These changes were accompanied by a series of democratic elections at national, provincial and district levels, held in 1999, 2004 and 2005.

This book analyses the elections held between April and September 2004. In April, elections were held for national, provincial and regional parliaments, while in July and September, for the first time in history, a new



president was directly elected. The book is primarily based on statistical data collected by the General Elections Commission, and on polling surveys by several research institutes.

After a brief general introduction, Chapter 1 analyses the 2004 parliamentary elections, discussing the dynamics at work within and between political parties, the election results, and the main differences between the 2004 and 1999 elections, both on Java and in the 'outer islands'. Chapter 2 looks at the provincial elections, and focuses on the fate of the major parties. Chapter 3 describes the first round of the presidential election in July, while Chapter 4 concentrates on the final round in September. In the last chapter, some concluding remarks are made concerning the transition towards democracy in Indonesia. Tables and appendices give detailed information about election results, and on the composition of the national parliament and the new Regional Representatives Council.

This book has a restricted value. It provides a wealth of statistical data, telling us a lot about figures but less about the broader patterns and background of change. No attention is paid to the new kinds of campaigns that were organized to support presidential candidates. No satisfactory explanation is given for the drop in popularity of PDI-P in the 2004 elections. Here, disappointment about corrupt PDI-P politicians, and the mismanagement of the elections of several provincial governors by PDI-P headquarters, played a significant role.

The final chapter, about peaceful transition towards democracy, is rather superficial and appears a little too optimistic. The recent spate of elections in Indonesia is indeed extremely important, but it signifies the rise of what may be called electoral democracy; to what extent this will be followed by institutional democracy remains to be seen.

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Casper Schuring, *Abdulgani; 70 jaar nationalist van het eerste uur*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003, 189 pp. ISBN 9057302616 (paperback).

NICO G. SCHULTE NORDHOLT  
University of Twente  
n.g.schultenordholt@utwente.nl

De auteur laat in zijn 'Ten geleide' een anonieme Indonesische journalist aan het woord die Abdulgani typeert als 'a man of all seasons', meewaaierend met alle winden. Een rake typering van de hoofdfiguur in deze biografie over Ruslan Abdulgani die in 1934 met een HBS diploma op zak voor de nationalisten koos en die daarna in alle latere perioden, tot 2002, het jaar waarin hij 88 werd en de auteur zijn boek afsluit, aan de kant van de machthebbers stond.

Die typering heeft echter een negatieve bijklank en het is opvallend dat de auteur zelf niet tot een duidelijke positiebepaling komt ten opzichte van zijn hoofdfiguur. De lezer is nu overgeleverd aan het oordeel van een onbekende Indonesische journalist waarmee de auteur zich mogelijk indekt tegen de kritiek als zou hij een hagiografie over Abdulgani geschreven hebben. Dat is niet het geval. Schuring ontloopt de bespreking van enkele netelige kwesties in het leven van Abdulgani niet. Die betreffen onder andere diens vermeende betrokkenheid bij een spionage affaire en bij een deviezensmokkel, beide in de jaren vijftig toen hij zeer hoge functies bij buitenlandse zaken onder Soekarno vervulde. Maar ook hier lijkt de auteur zich eerder te verschuilen achter het oordeel van anderen zonder zelf een conclusie te trekken. Uiteraard ontkent Abdulgani elke betrokkenheid bij de deviezensmokkel maar zijn reactie op de beschuldiging van spionage voor de Nederlandse inlichtingendienst ten tijde van de Nieuw-Guineakwestie tekent hem wel. Hij laat namelijk in het midden of hij als dubbelspion, op uitdrukkelijke instigatie van Soekarno, heeft geopeerd zoals door het toenmalige hoofd van de Indonesische inlichtingendienst, Kartono Kadri, tegenover de auteur stelde. Daarop aansluitend en als afronding van deze kwestie citeert Schuring (p. 63) – zonder een eigen oordeel te geven – weer anonieme zegslieden die tijdens de boekpresentatie in 2002 van de Indonesische vertaling van Schurings biografie uit 1995, *Roeslan Abdulgani – de man die bleef*, opmerkten dat Abdulgani ‘de beste PR-man (is) die Indonesië ooit heeft gehad’. Maar wel lijkt de auteur volmondig in te stemmen met het motto van die boekpresentatie: ‘Roeslan Abdulgani, hoofdfiguur aller tijden’.

Zo’n beoordeling wordt door de aanpak van de auteur versterkt. Schuring kiest er namelijk bewust voor de rasverteller Abdulgani zelf zoveel mogelijk aan het woord te laten. Op die wijze krijgt de lezer een boeiend relaas over de geschiedenis van Indonesië in de twintigste eeuw voorgeschoteld, maar wel een geschiedenis die bijna helemaal door Abdulgani is ingekleurd.

Ten opzichte van de biografie uit 1995 is dit nieuwe boek van Schuring een herziene en uitgebreidere uitgave geworden waardoor de periode na 1995 eigenlijk meer als een semibiografie over Abdulgani kan worden gezien. Dat laatste deel bestaat uit vijf hoofdstukken waarin op journalistieke wijze de val van Soeharto en de ontwikkelingen daarna, inclusief enkele centrale maatschappelijke thema’s, zoals de radicalisering van de Islam en de (nog steeds) voortdurende schendingen van mensenrechten, worden opgetekend. Roeslan Abdulgani krijgt in deze hoofdstukken de rol van politiek commentator toebedeeld waardoor zijn politieke opvattingen scherper naar voren treden. Al is het duidelijk dat hij, nu hij geen politieke verantwoordelijkheid meer draagt, zich kritischer opstelt dan in de perioden waarin hij als ‘overlever’ vrijwel altijd de ‘juiste’ dingen zei en deed. Maar de Nederlandse lezer wordt op deze wijze door Schuring ook in staat gesteld zich te verplaatsen in de positie van een betrokken Indonesiër. Dit laatste komt het sterkst naar voren in het slothoofdstuk dat als titel heeft: ‘De soms moeilijke relatie met Neder-

land'. Hierin is Roeslan weer vrijwel geheel alleen aan het woord. Dat biedt onder andere een aardige kijk op de spanningen tussen beide landen rondom het mislukte staatsbezoek van koningin Beatrix in 1995 en het begin van herstel van de relaties na 1998. Maar dat in 2005, zestig jaar na dato, dankzij het voortreffelijke diplomatieke werk van minister Bot, Nederland eindelijk 17 augustus als begindatum van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid erkende, viel helaas buiten bestek van Schurings boek. Ongetwijfeld heeft Abdulgani zich daarover zeer verheugd.

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Geoff Wade (translator and editor), *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu; An open access resource*. [www.epress.nus.edu.sg/msl/](http://www.epress.nus.edu.sg/msl/) (since 2005).

HEATHER SUTHERLAND  
Free University, Amsterdam (emeritus)  
[hsutherland@compuserve.com](mailto:hsutherland@compuserve.com)

Bouts of 'archive fever' used to be a professional risk and badge of honour for historians.<sup>1</sup> But the exponential growth of electronic resources has made source materials both more accessible and more remote. Like many others, scholars must now live with a new anxiety: how could I manage without the internet? Once researchers spent hours thumbing through dusty card catalogues and boxes of photographs, or travelling to explore disappointing collections, but today they can often search, scroll and order on-line. The romance of handling originals was poor compensation for the time previously lost. Now we can, for instance, download direct from distant library catalogues (Endnote), sift through images and maps (KITLV, KIT), read books, articles and dissertations, and explore Dutch East India Company documents (TANAP) or Java's trade (NEHA): all on-line. The preparatory orientation to a new project is now a matter of days rather than weeks, and once the work is completed, web publication is fast and far-reaching. The academic version of the long tail ensures that the small and scattered publics interested in esoteric subjects can now not only locate and present material, but also discuss it.

Geoff Wade's English translation and searchable electronic publication of the *Ming Shi-Lu* (MSL) is a boon to all researchers interested in the early history of Southeast Asia. Chinese sources are indispensable, and the 40,000-plus pages of the unpunctuated classical Chinese MSL contain annals covering 13 of the 15 emperors who ruled the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In contrast

<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Dust; The archive and cultural history*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

to Chinese dynastic histories, these 'veritable records' are not organized by topics, but are purely chronological. This has made them unusable for any but the most focused and qualified scholar, whose labour was only justified when researching a topic guaranteed to be well represented in the annals. The new MSL database contains more than 4,000 references to Southeast Asia, and since it can be searched chronologically (by Western year or reign date) or by specific terms, including place and personal names, it now provides an invaluable source for those seeking information that was once inaccessible because of the expertise and time required to work through the text. A very useful list of the 127 polities mentioned in the annals is also provided, offering identification when possible, discussing interpretation, and listing additional sources. This enables the reader to contemplate the complex mosaic of Yunan, for example, or to locate references to oceans and major nations (including the Portuguese and Dutch), or to the (sparse) information on Byzantium, Mecca or Mogadishu. A users' guide and additional bibliography is also included. Readers can gain an impression of how the material can be used by consulting articles or (electronically available) Asia Research Institute working papers by Wade.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the text itself, Wade has also provided, on the same site, a concise and interesting introduction to the resource: 'The *Ming Shi-Lu* as a source for Southeast Asian history'. This 37-page PDF file contains a brief introductory section followed by two substantial chapters, the first of which concentrates on the MSL itself: its contents, editions and characteristics. Wade explains how the bureaucrats who compiled the annals followed traditional historiographical themes, shaping them according to circumstances and personal motivation. Part 3 is a fascinating consideration of the Chinese 'world-view' and rhetoric represented in the text. The role of the benevolent emperor and the civilizing mission of Chinese culture are central to this world view, and form the foundation for Chinese classifications of, and attitudes to, non-Chinese persons and polities. Generally speaking, non-Chinese are seen as not, or barely, human, their place in the scale of civilization defined by the extent to which they meet Chinese expectations. The people of Annam, Vietnam, are seen as the most highly evolved. This is a highly ideological and normative view of the world but, as Wade is careful to point out, it is a 'necessary rhetoric' and represents the world and relationships as they ought to be, rather than as they actually are. Moreover, norms could be adjusted to meet pragmatic policy goals.

2 'Melaka in Ming Dynasty texts', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 70, 1997, pp. 33-69; 'The Ming Shi-lu as a source for Thai history – 14th to 17th centuries', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 31, 2000, pp. 249-94; *The 'Ming Shi' account of Champa*, ARI Working Paper 3, June 2003 ([www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps03\\_003.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps03_003.pdf)); *Ming China and Southeast Asia in the 15th century: a reappraisal*, ARI Working Paper 28, July 2004 ([www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04\\_028.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04_028.pdf)).

The site is maintained by Singapore E-Press and the Asia Research Institute; when I have consulted it in the past it has been reasonably fast to load and easy to use. However, when, in the course of preparing this review, I tried to perform various searches, it was extremely slow and I was unable to open the necessary pages. This may be a temporary glitch, but it is also a warning: web-based sources are only as durable and usable as their site maintenance. It is to be hoped that these technical problems will be resolved quickly and avoided in future, so that we can all benefit from this welcome and valuable initiative.

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Alexander Horstmann and Reed L. Wadley (eds), *Centering the margin; Agency and narrative in Southeast Asian borderlands*. New York: Berghahn, 2006, viii + 238 pp. [Asian Anthropologies 4.] Hardback. ISBN 1845450199. Price: USD 75.00 (hardback).

NICHOLAS TAPP  
Australian National University, Canberra  
nicholas.tapp@anu.edu.au

The literature on borders and borderlands, the state, globalization and ethnic minorities, is now huge, but the editors of this book do a good job of summarizing most of it in their introduction. This is the latest attempt to build on and take further Leach's pioneering work on the Kachin in the 1950s, which showed the intersection of cultural and political categories in the Southeast Asian borderlands; and it is perhaps one of the most successful. It is valuable to have a collection which covers the whole of Southeast Asia, from the northern periphery of Yunnan down to Makassar and Flores. The contributors are mostly anthropologists.

The editors argue persuasively for a flexible approach to the 'anthropology of borders', which should focus on the 'special character of [...] borderland cultures' in their interactions with the state (p. 7). While 'borderlander agency' challenges 'essentialized tradition and community' (p. 1), it may also act to reinforce state legitimacy (p. 4). We need a 'new perspective from the borders' to reduce the prevalence of 'state-centered studies' (p. 5) in which the border 'becomes a central place' (p. 6). Ethnic minorities and processes of migration and transnationalism become of particular importance in this perspective and, as Horstmann and Wadley note, the study of these 'geographies of incorporation' (p. 8) necessarily implicates a historical approach and attention to the power of oral tradition (p. 3). This sounds like an argument for anthropology of a classic kind, yet it is one alive to current issues of the relations between locality and globalized processes of mobility.

Niti Pawakapan describes the fascinating history of the town of Khun Yuam, in northern Thailand, founded by Shan settlers from Burma, and the success of official Thai narratives in suppressing oral memories of local distinctiveness, in the light of new forms of modern communications. William Cummings similarly discusses the tension between central and marginal discourses in defining Makassar as an 'internal border zone' (p. 53) within Indonesia. Guido Sprenger shows how different versions of a creation myth define the relations of the Rmeet (Lamet) with both Laos and Thailand, in the context of cross-border labour migration, trade, and marriage outside the community. This is a fine account of how indigenous categories may encapsulate notions of change and shifting forms of identity.

In Part 2 of the book, Sara Davis talks engagingly (and also with reference to oral myth) of how 'textual transmission, Buddhist sacrality, travel, and ethnic identity' (p. 87), which always characterized the cross-border relations of the Dai in Xishuang Banna, are being revived today in such a way that 'information, technology and culture' (p. 88) are transmitted across present-day borders. New forms of mobility have recreated a 'Tai religious and political geography' (p. 91), and cultural media transmit 'new visions of a transborder modernity' (p. 100). The discussion is sensitive and well informed.

Cynthia Chou looks at the 'paradoxical strengthening of state borders within [...] so-called borderless worlds' (p. 111) among the fishing people of the Riau islands, whose maritime world has been divided between five nations. They 'acknowledge borders only in a temporal sense' (p. 119); again, the oral tradition is important, and the argument is that states remain key institutions in 'structuring spatial realities via border constructions' (p. 117), but also that regional zones have often become fragmented under globalization: '[b]orderless worlds, in short, border worlds' (p. 129)!

Riwanto Tirtosudarmo deals directly with the transnational Florenese in their well-established migration to Sabah; this is a new kind of migration which 'combines traditional/ethnic migration and the international movement of labour' (p. 145), and the Florenese are a 'borderland community, with elements of a transnational community' (p. 146).

Horstmann too examines 'border-crossing practices as a way of life for ethnic minorities partitioned between two or more countries' (p. 155), in his case using the examples of the southern Thai Muslims and the Thai Buddhists in Kelantan. He argues that these 'networks of border people' are 'changing and reworking the meaning of citizenship', and that this 'flexible use of citizenship' appears to be a 'characteristic strategy of enclave cultures in the borderland' (p. 156). This is a paper focusing on how citizenship is actively situated and shaped in social and cultural relations (p. 159). It explores the 'ambiguity and shifts between the Thai and Malay worlds' (p. 174) in very varied contexts – a Thai Muslim woman married in Malaysia, Muslims based

in Thailand fishing in Malaysian waters, Thai Buddhist settlers in Malaysia. As on the borders of Southeast Asia with China as described by Sara Davis, Horstmann shows the importance of Buddhist (and Islamic) networks in knitting together cross-border communities. Marc Askew gives a somewhat different but complementary account of Thai-Malaysian relations, examining in a penetrating way the intersection of themes of 'sex' with themes of 'the sacred' in the visits of Malaysian and Singaporeans to Thailand. Thailand is a place of simultaneous 'consumption', 'blessing', and 'catharsis' (p. 178) – shopping, visits to religious sites, and indulgence in illicit activities like gambling and prostitution are closely mingled in the transformation of local places by these touristic activities. The borderland is 'a space inbetween' and a 'cathartic space', where visitors can escape the modernity of their own states, in a search for 'complementary virility and power' (pp. 200-1).

Finally, Matthew Amster provides an account of shifting historical perspectives on the 'border' among the Kelabit highland people of Malaysian Sabah in their relation to (Indonesian) Kalimantan. This is a valuable account of how the imposition of an international border has altered traditional perceptions of otherness. The figure of the local immigration officer who has invariably 'gone fishing' when called on seems to 'poetically capture the relationship between Kelabit and the state' (p. 221). The Kelabit Highlands appear to represent a 'unique kind of zone of sovereignty [...] where links to an economically powerful state serve to bolster local forms of agency and control' (p. 223). The concluding remarks about how the fluidity of the state is 'constantly being co-constructed in the interplay of exogenous and local concerns', particularly in border areas where 'special opportunities for local agency can arise' (p. 224), form a fitting conclusion to this book, which will swiftly become a key reading in university courses dealing with borderlands and Southeast Asia.

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Marieke Brand, Henk Schulte Nordholt and Fridus Steijlen (eds), *Indië verteld; Herinneringen, 1930-1950*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers/KITLV Uitgeverij, 2005, 32 pp. and two CD-ROMs. ISBN 9057303744. Price: EUR 19.95 (paperback).

JEAN GELMAN TAYLOR  
University of New South Wales  
jeant@unsw.edu.au

*Indië verteld* is the work of the Indonesia Oral History Project of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden. Thirty-five of the 724 men and women interviewed recall their experiences



in the Indies on CD-ROM. They remember the orderly times of Dutch governance, home life, school, Japanese prison camps, and the chaotic months following the collapse of Japan as Indonesian militias formed to grab power with visions local, national or religious. Interviewees begin speaking in formal tone and measure but, thanks to the skills of the interviewer, they become comfortable in their role, pick up speed, speak in confidential tones, betray strong emotions, and confide in the intimate manner of a family reunion.

The editors introduce each topic and summarize the interviews in the booklet that accompanies the two compact disks. The experience of listening and reading is enhanced by the inclusion of photographs from Indies albums relating to the topic and time. In a brief foreword, the editors signal their sense of the importance of the Oral History Project. Here are the experiences and opinions of people not normally heard or considered in political and social histories of the birth of Indonesia.

The narrators are no longer a part of Indonesia, having fled from guerrilla fighters in 1946 or been forced out by President Soekarno's expulsion orders of 1957. For survivors of those years, now scattered across the globe and finding home in Holland, North America, Australia or Israel, these spoken words will awaken poignant memories, revive a sense of uprootedness from the first homeland, and form a global sense of shared experience. There will be some satisfaction gained from knowing that their story is told and secured in the public domain.

For the student of Indonesia, here is material for reflection. The Republic of Indonesia is now in its sixth decade. The majority of its citizens have been born since the period that nourishes such complex memories for those interviewed. The Dutch, to today's Indonesians, are not remembered individuals, people who called the Indies home, but stereotyped perpetrators of colonial rule who appear in schoolbooks and politicians' speeches robbing Indonesians of their resources and dividing them one from the other. Should Indonesians care about people on the losing side of history? Indonesians are just emerging from a long period when history was expected to serve the state, to portray lives of the exemplary and of villains, and to steer clear of analysis of inter-communal conflicts. Encounter with *Indië verteld* might provide material for a more nuanced understanding of the colonial past.

What value should we place on memory? Surely the individual memories retold here have merged into collective received truths: golden childhood with *kokkie*, *kebon* and the *kampung* children; innocence lost in the camp lines where Japanese military decided each one's fate by computing their percentage of 'native blood'; life imperilled later by the Native turned foe, more dangerous, because more anarchic, than the Japanese soldier. There is still bitterness. One man says, 'The Indonesians got freedom at our expense'. For me, an affecting moment was a woman's reflections on the ship taking her away from Indonesia

to Holland. It is not the colonial relationship or the *batig slot* that fills her mind as Indonesia's shores fade into the distance, but the 'ten thousand things' that make up a life – her father's car, her school days, the war, the knowledge that everything is gone, that there will be no reclaiming the past.

The editors are motivated, not by sentiment or guilt, but by academic impulses as scholars to understand moments in the history of Indonesia's communities through the everyday experiences of ordinary people and a belief in the right of ordinary people to articulate their understanding of the history they have lived. Brand, Schulte Nordholt and Steijlen already have established their reputations in anthropology and history. As scholars they conduct research through the mediums familiar to all academics, but they combine conventional researches in archives with oral history and the latest techniques of film and recording. Through sight and sound they analyse the past in a fashion that will nourish nostalgia in ex-Indies people, while at the same time contributing to the scholarly study of colonialism, war and new nations. They use the techniques of oral history and the plumbing of memory to demonstrate that the discipline of history is capable of innovation. New times demand new forms of scholarship. But new forms also demand new tolerances and abilities in the historian, for these reminiscences meander and close attention has to be paid to isolate the significant from the welter of detail. The editors' work of arranging snatches of interviews into an orderly, date-driven framework ensures that history made accessible to a wider public can also be a valuable resource for the professional researcher.

This little volume and its compact disks will reverberate among the survivors. It is to be hoped that it will reach other audiences too, Dutch, Indonesian, generalist and specialist. Here is raw data for the historian, material on the murky beginnings of new nations and the insistent voice of testimony. In today's world, 'never again' is no longer a principled demand to be taken for granted, but a desperate plea.

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Tin Maung Maung Than, *State dominance in Myanmar; The political economy of industrialization*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007, xix + 472 pp. ISBN 9789812303509. Price: USD 34.90 (paperback).

SEAN TURNELL  
Macquarie University, Sydney  
sturnell@efs.mq.edu.au

*State dominance in Myanmar* is a significant book that fills a yawning gap in our understanding of the problems faced by Burma (otherwise known as Myanmar)

in its efforts to industrialize. The book has a number of themes – but above them all is that Burma's failure to industrialize, or even achieve economic progress in any meaningful sense, is a consequence of an obsessively interventionist state that has stymied the development of market-friendly economic institutions.

The book is organized chronologically and is divided into five broad sections that correspond with Burma's changing political arrangements. Beginning with a scene-setting analysis of the colonial legacy, it examines in turn the years of democracy in Burma (1948 up to the military coup of 1962), the years of direct military rule (1962–1974), the years of a one-party socialist state (1974–1988), and the years of military-rule 'market reform' (1988 to the present). The author highlights that, throughout each of these eras, the state in Burma acted as the central actor rather than the facilitator of industrial development. In this context the state's fixation on self-reliance, together with a penchant for central planning, was manifested in largely state ownership of the means of production and the discouragement of private initiative. This economic system of *dirigisme* was most obvious during the years in which the country was suffering under what was coined the 'Burma road to socialism' (encompassing successive regimes from 1962 to 1988), but its traces were nascent in the democracy era and it remains the dominant paradigm. Notwithstanding the instigation of (both real and perceived) economic reforms in the 1990s, the book draws attention to the continuities in the hegemony of the state in Burma's economy – a hegemony that it concludes (p. 397) 'will prevail rather than wither away under the onslaught of market forces, civil society and globalization'.

Tin Maung Maung Than is an excellent diagnostician of Burma's economic development failure, but he is not content simply to be a critic. In the final section of the book he outlines a series of reforms that will be necessary if Burma is to emulate, even weakly, the successful market-oriented 'newly-industrialising countries' that are its peers in Southeast Asia. These reforms include measures central to Burma's macroeconomic 'fundamentals' – tighter fiscal discipline, the restoration of trust in the country's currency and financial system, liberalizing foreign trade and the exchange rate – and deeper political reforms that 'reflect the state's genuine acceptance of the private sector as a valued partner rather than its handmaiden' (p. 396).

*State dominance in Myanmar* is made more impressive by the way it deals with the reality that economic data for Burma is unreliable, incomplete and most often impossible to reconcile even on its own terms. The author wisely eschews the false precision of using detailed (but largely fabricated) official economic data in favour of an approach that seeks to identify critical trends and patterns. The overall result is a book of integrity as well as great insight. It will be indispensable to any serious student of this often forgotten corner of Southeast Asia.

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Henk Schulte Nordholt and Ireen Hoogenboom (eds), *Indonesian transitions*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006. xiv + 356 pp. ISBN 9792458441 (paperback).

ROBERT WESSING  
Leiden  
robertwessing@yahoo.com

This collection of essays, which includes contributions by both Dutch and Indonesian scholars, reports on the results of the 2001-2005 Dutch research program 'Indonesia in Transition', the aim of which was to document how Indonesians experienced and narrated the economic and political crises that had beset the nation since about 1996. The project's broad scope included discussions of regionalism since the 1950s, the development of civil society and Islam's role in this process, and the role of the mass media in depicting various aspects of the changes Indonesia underwent. Rather than focusing on formal institutions, the different projects into which the programme was divided conducted micro-studies that concentrated on the interests and motivations of real actors in order to gain comparative insight into local developments.

After the introductory chapter by one of the book's editors, Henk Schulte Nordholt, which discusses the volume as a whole, the second chapter by Agus Indiyanto and others begins by addressing the concept of crisis itself. Studies of crises – a crisis being 'a short term and dramatic phenomenon' (p. 25) – often depict people as helpless victims of the processes of change. Yet this is not always so, as there are also those who manage to turn events to their hand and profit by the changes. Case studies from Sulawesi, West Sumatra and West Kalimantan show that while many people indeed suffered financially during the period of fluidity and turbulence, others, especially some who had been well connected before the crisis, managed to profit economically or politically from the new situation. The disruptions precipitated changes in patterns of access to resources, and in perceptions and motivations (p. 25). In some instances they gave rise to new institutions, leaders, and lifestyles. The (previously) less fortunate, however, have not seen positive changes (p. 68).

Chapter 3, by Daniel Fitzpatrick, addresses the problem of the interface between local, customary rules regarding land, and national laws on this subject. The basic issue here is that the multiplicity of local *adat* (customary) arrangements that during colonial times existed alongside Dutch statutory law is seen as failing to provide legal certainty, and is counterproductive to nation-building efforts. The extension of state control over land under the Orde Baru regime, as well as widespread migration and industrialization, has led to many areas of conflict and lack of clarity. The current decentralized authorities thus face pluralism and conflict on various levels.

The question of local rights versus national interests also comes to the fore in the chapter by Gusti Asnan and others on the nation and the region. Paralleling the continual tug of war between local and national law discussed in Chapter 3, there is an ongoing struggle to maintain ethnic identity within the national context. Some of this opposition has its roots in the regional rebellions of the 1950s, including struggles to turn Indonesia into a Muslim state. Such rebellions, however, often had their roots in the mismanagement of local affairs by the centre. Even though regionalism has been characterized as backward, regional identity is important and ethnic markers proliferate in the heartlands of territories whose outer boundaries may be difficult to define. Furthermore, as also became clear in Chapter 2, people's identity, and often their power base, lies in local identification. The question is whether a unitary pan-Indonesian culture is possible at all levels. It did not exist under Dutch colonial rule – witness the multiplicity of local *adat* laws – and even Majapahit's 'unification' of Indonesia was only a political one, if that. The idea of domination by Jakarta remains unattractive, yet local peoples want to be Indonesian, albeit in their own local ways (pp. 117-8).

The interests of regional elites again become apparent in Gerry van Klinken's chapter on communal conflict, in which he argues that rather than scarcity it is often an abundance of resources that leads to conflict. Taking local elites as his unit of analysis, Van Klinken notes that while such elites are expected to offer leadership (p. 166), they may do so while keeping their own interests clearly in mind, manipulating ethnic sentiments, and fears of economic decline, to their own advantage (pp. 194-6). As a result, these same elites remain in power (or manage to consolidate power) while the situation of the people they manipulate, on both sides of the ethnic conflict, remains unchanged. All this indicates the absence of a civil society able to control elites and government and to aid in developing a more democratic interaction.

In Chapter 6, Martin van Bruinessen and Farid Wajidi look precisely at an institution of civil society, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, with which some 40 percent of Indonesia's Muslims identify to some degree. During the Orde Baru the NU withdrew from party politics to concentrate on social concerns varying, depending on the preference of individual leaders, from matters of Islamic law to the active promotion of social and economic welfare. Among those who followed the latter course was the later president Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who is discussed but whose writings, strangely, are not cited. The young activists became increasingly aware that development involved conflicting interests, and also noted the collaboration of some religious leaders in violating their parishioners' rights. The NU-based NGOs tended to distance themselves from the older leaders to address new problems facing NU's primarily rural and economically backward constituency. Questions of democracy figured

prominently here. In 2004 the leadership of the NU reoriented itself towards elite politics and away from social activism, showing once again the primacy of elite concerns over the welfare of the people that has been apparent in all the chapters discussed so far. Yet a small number of not-so-prominent leaders (*kiai rakyat*) continue to push for social and moral change (pp. 232-3). One of these is Nyai Ruqayyah, a female *kiai rakyat* who fights for the empowerment of women and brings previously 'hidden' matters of abuse in the home and other 'scandals' out in the open and thus into discussion. An NU in flux challenges established inequalities even though the legitimacy of the *kiai rakyat* remains anchored in tradition (p. 242).

Yatun Sastramidjaja's discussion of the role of students in bringing about the downfall of Soeharto's Orde Baru regime shows how the ruling establishment and the students themselves perceive this role differently. Looking at the role of students in previous political crises (for instance, those of 1908, 1928, 1945, and 1966), he notes that each of these was given the appellation *angkatan* (generation), an 'official recognition of national achievement'. This title, while laudatory, has to do with myths of the past and implies an expectation that the students, having played their part, will return to the campus and leave further developments to the government (pp. 259, 262). The designation *angkatan*, then, co-opted and immobilized the student movement by making it an official part of a chain of historical events. The students themselves, on the other hand, embedded their activities in places rather than in time, referring to events that had taken place at Semangi, Trisakti University, and elsewhere (pp. 262-79) where they had faced government troops. While these places may live on in the participants' memories, their actuality is now being erased as they disappear in urban renewal projects: 'public space is being censored' (p. 279). As events fade into the past, their narration is co-opted: for instance by the film *Gie*, based on the life of the famous student activist Soe Hok Gie, which moves activist and movement into the realm of popular culture.

Just as the narration of the student movement shapes perceptions of it, television presentations of the news and other concerns link up with and shape popular perceptions of reality. Chapter 8, by Bernard Arps and Katinka van Heeren, explores how television, national and regional, reflects people's concerns. Through a modern media focus on popular beliefs in ghosts, long denigrated under the Orde Baru regime, the program *Pemburu hantu* ('Ghost hunters') makes these beliefs, and the program's mystical personnel, legitimate and modern. By inviting viewers' participation through prayers, it also modernizes their long denigrated beliefs in the supernatural – indeed, the distinction between traditional and modern ceases to be relevant as all practices are portrayed as equally modern (p. 298). Similarly, by presenting the news in the local vernacular (the Surabayan dialect) and inviting the participation of the man in the street, television news, which previously had been

rather removed from people's actual experience, now acquires new relevance and immediacy, embedding the local in the global and vice versa.

One item that increasingly links local individuals to the wider world is the mobile phone. In the final chapter, Bart Barendregt looks at two aspects of this technology in Java: first, how mythologies of (for instance) haunted phones embed this global gadget in a local reality, and, second, the strategies used by the financially less well-off to participate in what is still to some degree (though this is changing rapidly) an elite mode of communication. While the latest models of mobile phones are symbols of one's participation in a consuming lifestyle (p. 333), stolen and refitted phones are available and affordable to the poor. Indeed, demand for such phones has created a market and with it business opportunities for technologically informed people.

Two threads seem to run through these essays: the resilience and power of elites to turn matters to their benefit, and the efforts from below to achieve greater degrees of democracy. During the Orde Baru regime, Henk Schulte Nordholt observes (p. 3), life was easy in that people were told what to think and only had to do what they were told. Today, people must think for themselves and be responsible for their choices. Democracy has produced an Indonesia that is difficult to define and predict. This is an uncomfortable situation for many. Yet, while it is true that there is a greater freedom of expression and choice in today's Indonesia, the continuing power of the elites should not be discounted. These people too have interests to defend, as the essays presented in this volume make clear. As long as democratic developments do not oppose these interests, upheavals and conflict, as the editor notes, will remain unlikely (p. 18). When elite interests are threatened, however, other scenarios are not unlikely because while 'electoral democracy has taken root', institutional democracy has not automatically followed (p. 3). The present time, indeed, is one of muddling through, and of a great deal of improvisation (p. 18).

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